

# Joaquin Miller's Poems

SONGS OF THE SIERRAS

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July 15th  
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**Bear Edition**

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# Joaquin Miller's Poems

[in six volumes]

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**Volume Two**

**Songs of the Sierras**



San Francisco  
**The Whitaker & Ray Company**

1909

A.304343

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C. H. MILLER

1909

TO  
MY PARENTS  
HULINGS  
AND MARGARET WITT MILLER



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# **SONGS OF THE SIERRAS**



## WALKER IN NICARAGUA

### CHANT I

#### I

*That man who lives for self alone  
Lives for the meanest mortal known.*

I celebrate no man of strife,  
I eat no bread with blood upon.  
'Twere braver far to live unknown,  
To live alone and die alone  
Than owe sweet song, aye owe sweet life,  
Or sweeter fame, to saber drawn.

#### II

Wreathe ye who may the victor's bay,  
Fill book on book with battles, then  
Fill every public park you may  
With iron-fashioned fighting men  
Begirt with blade and cannon ball,  
With not one woman's plinth mid all.

But she who rocks the cradle, she  
Who croons and rocks all day, all night,  
And knows no public place or name  
Makes far the better, braver fight,  
Deserves a nobler, fairer fame  
Than all bronze men of historie.

The foot that rocks the babe to rest  
Keeps step, keeps song with singing dawn.  
The hand that holds the babe to breast

Is sceptered as King Solomon.  
And yet, for all she does, has done,  
Has not one monument, not one!

III

And he who guides the good plowshare,  
Binds golden sheaves, unnamed, unknown,  
Who harvests what his hand hath sown,  
Does more for God, for man, his own—  
Dares more than all mad heroes dare.

IV

And like to him the man who keeps  
Calm watch on Freedom's outer wall,  
Who sees the great moon rise and fall  
Yet sleeps and rests and rests and sleeps—  
The man who knows, the man who sees  
God in the grass, God in the trees,  
Sees good in all, sees God in all—  
Gets more, gives more, does more true weal  
Than all your storied men of steel.

V

But nobler still the man who leads  
Far out the deadly firing line  
To hew the way, subdue, refine  
By dauntless and unselfish deeds;  
Who lays aside his student's book  
And gathers up his knotted thews  
And, facing westward, hews and hews  
The way for plowshare, pruning hook  
And scarce recks if he win or lose;

Who sees white duty over all,  
Fair duty, halo-topt and tall;  
Far pointing where his pathway lies,  
And dares not falter, rest, repine,  
But forward, forward, wins and—dies.

VI

I sing this man who sought man's good,  
Who fought for peace, unselfish fought,  
Who silent fell and murmured not,  
This man whom no man understood,  
This great man so well-nigh forgot,  
This man who led, who faltered not,  
This student, soldier, president,  
Who chose the weaker side and sent  
Such spirit through his fearless few  
As only Khartoum Gordon knew.

VII

I sing those children of the sun  
Because I love them and because  
I would that you should love them, too,  
As tenderly as he had done  
Ere Fate laid her cold finger to  
His bounding pulse and bade him pause.

VIII

A man to love, a land to love;  
A land of gold, of sapphire seas,  
Such blue below, such blue above,  
Such fruits and ever-flowered trees—  
The fairest Eden-land that is,

And I am joyed that it is his;  
He won it, holds, with dust-full hands—  
This soldier born, born and not made,  
Who scorned to make rude war a trade.

IX

A soldier born, let this be said  
Above my brave, dishonored dead;  
I ask no more, this is not much,  
Yet I disdain a colder touch  
To memory as dear as his;  
For he was true as steel, or star,  
And brave as Yuba's grizzlies are,  
Yet gentle as a panther is  
Mouthing her young in her first fierce kiss.

X

A dash of sadness in his air,  
Born, may be, of his over care,  
And may be, born of a despair  
In early love—I never knew;  
I question not, as many do,  
Of things as sacred as this is;  
I only know that he to me  
Was all a father, friend, could be;  
I sought to know no more than this  
Of history of him or his.

A piercing eye, a princely air,  
A presence like a chevalier,  
Half angel and half Lucifer;  
Sombrero black, with plume of snow  
That swept his careless locks below;

A red serape with bars of gold,  
All heedless falling, fold on fold,  
A sash of silk, where flashing swung  
A sword as swift as serpent's tongue,  
In sheath of silver chased in gold;  
Great Spanish spurs with bells of steel  
That dash'd and dangled at the heel;  
A face of blended pride and pain,  
Of mingled pleading and disdain,  
With shades of glory and of grief—  
The famous filibuster chief  
Stood front his men among the trees  
That top the fierce Cordilleras,  
With bent arm arched above his brow;—  
Stood still, he stands, a picture, now—  
Long gazing down his inland seas.

## XI

What strange, strong, bearded men were these  
He led above his tropic seas!  
Men sometimes of uncommon birth,  
Men rich in stories all untold,  
Who boasted not, though more than bold,  
Blown from the four parts of the earth.  
Men mighty-thewed, as Sampson was,  
That had been kings in any cause,  
A remnant of the races past;  
Dark-browed, as if in iron cast,  
Broad-breasted as twin gates of brass,—  
Men strangely brave and fiercely true,  
Who dared the West when giants were,  
Who erred, yet bravely dared to err—  
A remnant of that dauntless few  
Who held no crime or curse or vice

As dark as that of cowardice;  
With blendings of the worst and best  
Of faults and virtues that have blest  
Or cursed or thrilled the human breast.

XII

They rode, a troop of bearded men,  
Rode two and two out from the town,  
And some were blonde and some were brown,  
And all as brave as Sioux; but when  
From warlike Leon south, the line  
That bound them in the laws of man  
Was passed, and peace stood mute behind  
And streamed a banner to the wind  
The world knew not, there was a sign  
Of awe, of silence, rear and van.

XIII

Men thought who scarce had thought before;  
I heard the clang and clash of steel  
From sword at hand and spur at heel  
And iron feet, but nothing more.

XIV

Some thought of Texas, some of Maine,  
But one of wood-set Tennessee.  
And one of Avon thought, and one  
Thought of an isle beneath the sun,  
And one, a dusky son of Spain,  
Soft hummed his señorita's air  
Half laughed, shook back his heavy hair  
And then—he would not think again,

And one of Wabash thought, and he  
Thought tenderly, thought tearfully;  
And one turned sadly to the Spree.

XV

Defeat meant something more than death;  
The world was ready, keen to smite,  
As stern and still beneath its ban  
With iron will and bated breath,  
Their hands against their fellow-man,  
They rode—each man an Ishmaelite.

XVI

But when we topped the hills of pine,  
These men dismounted, doffed their cares,  
Talk'd loud and laugh'd old love affairs,  
And on the grass took meat and wine,  
And never gave a thought again  
To land or life that lay behind,  
Or love, or care of any kind  
Beyond the present cross or pain.

XVII

And I, a waif of stormy seas,  
A child among such men as these,  
Was blown along this savage surf  
And rested with them on the turf,  
And took delight below the trees.

XVIII

I did not question, did not care  
To know the right or wrong. I saw  
That savage freedom had a spell,  
And loved it more than word can tell.  
I snapped my fingers at the law,  
And dared to laugh, and laughed to dare.

XIX

I bear my burden of the shame,—  
I shun it not, and naught forget,  
However much I may regret;  
I claim some candor to my name,  
And courage cannot change or die,—  
Did they deserve to die? they died!  
Let justice then be satisfied,  
And as for me, why, what am I?

XX

The standing side by side till death,  
The dying for some wounded friend,  
The faith that failed not to the end,  
The strong endurance till the breath  
And body took their ways apart,  
I only know. I keep my trust.  
Their vices! earth has them by heart:  
Their virtues! they are with the dust.

XXI

How we descended, troop on troop,  
As wide-winged eagles downward swoop!

How wound we through the fragrant wood,  
With all its broad boughs hung in green,  
With sweeping mosses traileid between!  
How waked the spotted beasts of prey,  
Deep sleeping from the face of day,  
And dashed them, like a dashing flood,  
Down deep defile and densest wood!

XXII

What snakes! long, lithe and beautiful  
As green and graceful boughey bamboo.  
How they did twine them through and through  
Green boughs that hung red-fruited full!  
One, monster-sized, above me hung,  
Close eyed me with his bright pink eyes,  
Then raised his folds, and swayed and swung,  
And licked like lightning, his red tongue,  
Then oped his wide mouth with surprise;  
He writhed and curved and raised and lowered  
His folds, like liftings of the tide,  
Then sank so low I touched his side,  
As I rode by, with my boy's sword.  
The trees shook hands high overhead,  
And bowed and intertwined across  
The narrow way, while leaves and moss  
And luscious fruit, gold-hued and red,  
Through all the canopy of green,  
Let not one sun-shaft shoot between.

XXIII

Birds hung and swung, green-robed and red,  
Or drooped in curved lines dreamily,  
Rainbows reversed, from tree to tree,

Or sang low hanging overhead—  
Sang low, as if they sang and slept,  
Sang faint like some far waterfall,  
And took no note of us at all,  
Though nuts that in the way were spread  
Did crash and crackle where we stept.

XXIV

Wild lilies, tall as maidens are,  
As sweet of breath, as purely fair,  
As fair as faith, as true as truth,  
Fell thick before our iron tread,  
In fragrant sacrifice of ruth.  
Rich ripened fruit a fragrance shed  
And hung in hand-reach overhead,  
In nest of blossoms on the shoot,  
The very shoot that bore the fruit.

XXV

How ran lithe monkeys through the leaves!  
How rush'd they through, brown clad and blue,  
Like shuttles hurried through and through  
The threads a hasty weaver weaves!  
How quick they cast us fruits of gold,  
Then loosened hand and all foothold,  
And hung, limp, limber, as if dead,  
Hung low and listless overhead;  
And all the time with half oped eyes  
Bent full on us in mute surprise—  
Looked wisely too, as wise hens do  
That watch you with the head askew.

XXVI

The long day through, from blossomed trees,  
There came the sweet song of sweet bees,  
With chorus tones of cockatoo  
That slid his beak along the bough  
And walked and talked and hung and swung,  
In crown of gold and coat of blue,  
The wisest fool that ever sung,  
Or wore a crown or held a tongue.

XXVII

Oh! when we broke the somber wood  
And pierced at last a sunny plain,  
How wild and still with wonder stood  
The proud mustangs with bannered mane  
And necks that never knew a rein,  
And nostrils lifted high, and blown,  
Fierce breathing as a hurricane:  
Yet by their leader held the while  
In solid column, square and file.  
And ranks more martial than our own!

XXVIII

\* \* \* \* \*

Some one above the common kind,  
Some one to look to, lean upon,  
May be, is much a woman's mind;  
But it was mine, and I had drawn  
A rein beside the chief while we  
Rode down the mesa leisurely.  
Then he grew kind and questioned me  
Of kindred, home, and home affair,

Of how I came to wander there,  
And had my father herds and land  
And men in hundreds at command?

At which I, silent, shook my head,  
Then, timid, met his eyes and said:  
"Not so. Where sunny foothills run  
Down to the North Pacific sea,  
And where Willamette meets the sun  
In many angles, patiently  
My father tends some flocks of snow,  
And turns alone the mellow sod  
And sows some fields not over broad,  
And mourns my long delay in vain,  
Nor bids one serve man come or go;  
While mother from her wheel or churn,  
And maybe from the milking shed,  
Oft lifts an humbled wearied head  
To watch and wish her boy's return  
Across the camas' blossomed plain."

## XXIX

He held his bent head very low,  
A sudden sadness in his air;  
Then reached and touched my yellow hair  
And tossed the long locks in his hand,  
Toyed with them, sudden let them go,  
Then thrummed about his saddle bow  
As thought ran swift across his face;  
Then turning instant in his place,  
He gave some short and quick command.  
They brought the best steed of the band,  
They swung a carbine at my side,  
He bade me mount and by him ride,

And from that hour to the end  
I never felt the need of friend.

XXX

\* \* \* \* \*

Far in a wildest quinine wood  
We found a city old—so old  
Its very walls were turned to mould  
And stately trees upon them stood.  
No history has mentioned it,  
No map has given it a place;  
The last dim trace of tribe and race—  
The world's forgetfulness is fit.

XXXI

It held one structure grand and moss'd,  
Mighty as any castle sung,  
And old when oldest Ind was young,  
With threshold Christian never crossed;  
A temple builded to the sun,  
Along whose somber altar-stone  
Brown, bleeding virgins had been strown  
Like leaves, when leaves are crisp and dun,  
In ages ere the Sphynx was born,  
Or Babylon knew night, or morn.

XXXII

My chief swift up the marble stept—  
He ever led, through that wild land—  
When down the stones, with double hand  
To his machete, a Sun priest leapt,  
Hot bent to barter life for life,

A Texan drove his Bowie knife  
Full through his thick and broad breast bone,  
And broke the point against the stone,  
The dark stone of the temple wall.  
I saw him loose all hold and fall  
Full length with head hung down the stone;  
I saw run down a ruddy flood  
Of smoking, pulsing human blood.  
Then from the dusk there crept a crone  
And kissed the gory hands and face,  
And smote herself. Then one by one  
Some dusk priests crept and did the same,  
Then bore the dead man from the place.  
Down darkened aisles the brown priests came,  
So picture-like, with sandaled feet  
And long, gray, dismal, grass-wove gowns,  
So like the pictures of old time,  
And stood all still and dark of frowns,  
At blood upon the stone and street.  
Stern men laid ready hand to sword  
And boldly spake some bitter word;  
But they were stubborn still and stood  
Fierce frowning as a winter wood,  
And mutt'ring something of the crime  
Of blood upon their temple stone,  
As if the first that it had known!

## XXXIII

We strode on through each massive door  
With clash of steel at heel, and with  
Some swords all red and ready drawn.  
I traced the sharp edge of my sword  
Along both marble wall and floor  
For crack or crevice; there was none.

From one vast mount of marble stone  
The mighty temple had been cored  
By nut-brown children of the sun,  
When stars were newly bright and blithe  
Of song along the rim of dawn,  
A mighty marble monolith!

CHANT II

I

*So old, so new and yet how old  
This forest's green, that mesa's gold!*

Rank, wild oats, waving in wild strength—  
The lion's tawny mane and length!  
Rank Artemesia, odorous  
And gray with bald antiquity—  
The rough arroyo swallowed us  
As we rode down by two, by three,  
The braying ass, the neighing stud—  
And now the mesa, broad and free;  
Tall cacti blooms, as tipped with blood:  
And here a burning bush, and there  
The red night-blooming cereus  
Kneeled low, as if saluting us—  
Kneeled as some red-robed monk at prayer,  
High up the gleaming steeps of snow  
Of Zacatecas, Mexico.

To left such green wood, and such green!  
To right brown mesa, bald and bare:  
But where we rode, the two between—  
Such crimson, crimson everywhere!

Aye, earth was gaily garmented;  
The great, green robe spread far away,  
So far no man would dare to say,  
And this great, green robe fringed with red,  
Lay trackless, lifeless as the dead.  
The yellow lion's skin behind,  
The wild oats waving in the wind;  
But that dense, silent wold of death  
Drew not a breath, knew not a breath!

## II

From Oro Yarè toward the sea  
Slow rounding down the river's source,  
Red men, brown men, foot, cavalry,  
We marched, a mottled, maniac force—  
We rode so close to this dense wood,  
So somber, silent, deep and lorn,  
That when at last we slow drew rein  
The heat was as a choking pain.  
The chief stood in his stirrups; stood  
With set lips lifted up in scorn  
To thus be baffled by a wood  
And looked and looked that sultry morn:  
The while our allies looked away  
As if in dread to say or stay.

Far, far afield from out the night  
Of silent blackness burst a cone  
Of comely fashion, marble white,  
And lone as God, as white and lone  
As God upon the great white throne.

He beck'd some brown men, bade them say:  
Then slow, a sandaled, nude old man,

As if not daring to say nay  
Began, fast pointing far away—  
Then two, then three, then all began.

III

Such stories as our allies said  
Of such strange people meshed and hid  
That drear, deep wilderness amid—  
Their very name they spoke with dread!  
They were not white men, brown men, red,  
Not Spanish blood, not native blood,  
Not Toltec, Aztec, but a race  
Of cruel men who claimed to trace  
Their fathers back beyond the flood—  
Beyond the time when they alone  
Took refuge on their rock-ribb'd cone.

Such stories as our allies told  
Of gold, of river-beds of gold  
Far in that lost land's wood-walled heart  
That lay below the comely cone  
As made our filibusters start  
And think of this and this alone:  
The while the silent chief looked down  
Upon their zeal with sullen frown.

Such stories of red gold at morn  
When savage rivers, sudden born  
Of thunder, had swept on and on—  
Such seams of gold that lay upon  
White beds of quartz, bright as the sun  
When night and sudden storm were done:  
Free gold for all who deemed it fit  
To stoop, take up and husband it.

Such stories as our allies told  
Or armlets, wristlets, wrought in gold  
So massive that the arms grew long  
And sinewy and over strong  
For battle from the very weight  
Of gold; of gold-wrought arrowheads,  
Of gold in shallow brooklet beds  
As plentiful as yellow corn  
Sown ere the blackbirds swoop at morn  
To storm the thrifty farmer's gate:

IV

Such stories as our allies told  
Of how, in armored days of old,  
The Spaniard here had dared and died  
In all his splendid strength and pride,  
In maddened greed for this red gold:  
How, many times in after years,  
Troop after troop went forth again,  
The Spanish Don, the dauntless son,  
To dare the dread obsidian spears,  
The gold-wrought arrowheads like rain—  
But never one returned, not one!

Such stories as our allies said  
Of tall, dusk women, garmented  
Like unto fairest flowered trees;  
Of busy women, like to bees,  
Who chased the purple butterfly  
Far up the gray steeps of the sky  
And plucked his little silken nest  
To spin and weave the gorgeous vest,  
The yellow robe, raboso red:

Such stories as our allies told  
Of temples builded to the sun,  
Of human sacrifice and how,  
Like stealthy panthers, even now,  
These beauteous, sultry, moonlit nights,  
Hard men steal down, just as of old,  
And seize fair maidens for their rites:  
That this was why the land lay bare  
Of flock or field or maiden fair,  
All up and down, for leagues away—  
That even now, this very day,  
Their yonder homeward trail was plain  
With little footprints made in pain:  
Torn feet that turn not back again.

## V

You ask me what my chieftain said?  
He rarely said, he simply did.  
Dismounting where the lame feet led,  
Shut in as shuts a coffin lid,  
He chose his choicest at a sign  
And silent led right on and on;  
Right on all day, right on all night,  
And not one foot set left or right,  
And not one faltered yea or nay  
Or turned his head to see or say  
Until, at sudden burst of dawn,  
A smell of water was and then  
That ugly, growling, bulldog drum!  
It turned the very leaves one side  
The while it howled, "They come! They  
come!"

## VI

And they, too, came, came as a blast  
Of twisting March winds, gust on gust,  
Whirl red leaves, dead leaves, ashes, dust—  
A cyclone scarce could sweep so fast.  
Scant time to choose a friendly tree,  
Scarce time to drop a bended knee,  
To catch quick carbine to its place  
And fall hard fighting, face to face.

Was ever such hot place of death!  
Scarce room was there to draw full breath:  
Red vines climbed up, green boughs hung down,  
Red-pepsin, green-leaved rubber-tree,  
Black banyan in black density!  
I dared a precious second's pause  
To choose my tree: I chose because  
Great ivy vines climbed high, climbed higher  
All crimson to its very crown—  
Elijah's chariot of fire!

## VII

Such tangle, jungle, who could stand?  
Such jungle, tangle, who could see?  
What need, indeed, to see when we  
Fell instant fighting, hand to hand?  
Long bamboo lances searched us out,  
Short javelins, with points of glass,  
Great arrowheads of gold, like hail!  
Ah! it had been a sorry rout  
Had each not held his narrow pass—  
With not one left to tell the tale.

They fought in herd, they fell in heap,  
Rushed here, rushed there, like silly sheep,  
And met behind each blazing tree  
A double-barreled battery,  
A dozen deadly, leaden shot,  
Till suddenly the rush and din  
Of arrow, spear, lance, javelin,  
And all that frenzied host was not.

## VIII

And yet, what scores could not retreat!  
'Twas pitiful! Spare me the pain,  
The hard, sad detail of the slain,  
The brave dead clutching to the loam  
As if to hold their ancient home  
Forever back from stranger feet!

## IX

He dashed right on, but bade me stay;  
No time for parley or delay;  
He called his every man to come—  
As ever, he was still the first—  
His men were dying, dead of thirst:  
And then to drive the vantage home!

## X

A little time, then such a shout!  
I knew the men then drank their fill,  
I felt their feasting, do not doubt,  
I smelled ripe plantains, rind of red  
And cored like unto yellow cream;  
I saw bananas bank the stream,

Ripe mangoes hanging overhead—  
So dead with hunger, thirst! I seem  
To see them, breathe them, taste them still:  
To see men feasting to their fill,  
One hand the gun, red fruit in one,  
The swift, sweet water at their feet:  
And I shall see, shall feel them eat  
And drink and drink till life is done.

I heard a cautious low-bird call.  
He came, and with him came just one:  
Canteen, machete, ripe mangoes, gun,  
And I must eat, drink, share with all.

## XI

Just then a child, her sweet face red  
With blood, crept from a heap of dead.  
I leaned down, drew her to my knee,  
Bathed her sweet face, then hurriedly  
To where a dying comrade lay  
Beside his war-torn battle tree;  
And lo! the poor girl followed me  
And tried to help, to soothe, to say.

The chief had chased the frenzied throng  
On o'er the stream a short half mile;  
Had watched it melt into the isle  
And then, as if ten thousand strong  
Stood at his back in bold guard line,  
Had placed his every man, save one—  
Then up and down, machete and gun,  
They paced and passed the countersign,

And laughed their city, Chantale,  
Laughed gold-strewn, gory Chantale  
Dim seen through copse of banyan tree.

And light of step, as jaunty, gay  
As on some happy holiday  
They stepped with head high in the air,  
And sang, sang loud and saucily.  
And now and then a shot rang out  
At interval of song and shout  
Tow'rd gold-strewn, gory Chantale  
And tore through island vine and tree.

## XII

Gods! what a dauntless, daring sight!  
Why, these strange men had fought all day!  
Why, these strong men had marched all night;  
Why, they had scarcely ate or slept,  
Yet still with saucy pride they stept  
And still each step was spank and gay.

## XIII

Dusk came, such solemn, stately dusk!  
Black clouds blocked up a sky of red,  
The hot wood had a smell of musk—  
Of dying roses for the dead.

Then lightning was, and thunder low,  
Low rumbling lion-like and slow,  
Then that dread drum began to beat  
A bow-shot front us mid the isle!  
Why, they had made a mad retreat—  
Were they not marshaling meanwhile?

## XIV

That bull-dog drum was like a chill;  
It made night monstrous; men stood still  
And looked their brave chief in the face.  
Why, had God filled the fiery skies  
With thunder, lightning, had He filled  
The earth with every fighting race  
That knows the ugly trade of death  
And asked their lives in sacrifice  
These men had scarcely cared a breath,  
Yet now they stood unnerved and chilled.

Would it but miss a single note,  
Pause but to take a single breath,  
As any bull-dog's breath is drawn,  
'Twere not so worse to bear than death!  
But no, that belching, bull-dog throat  
Belched on, belched on, right on and on.

## XV

He saw their dread then slowly said  
"How many? and when will they come?"  
"Pass me the guard line, chief," I said,  
"Pass me the guard and you shall know  
What says, what means that chilling drum:  
Night gathers, and the ghostly dead  
Are not more noiseless where they go  
Than I shall go, go, come again;  
Or, silent, join the happier slain."

XVI

He wrote, wrote calmly; they must feel  
His confidence, his nerve of steel,  
His sure possession to the last.  
I thrust the thin script down my boot,  
Stept back, stood firm, made slow salute,  
Turned on my heel and hastened past.

XVII

The dappled sky now darkened till  
The moon came out, and then was gone,  
And all was black and wild and wide.  
I should have lost my way and died  
Had not that drum beat on and on.  
The warm wave swept above my waist;  
I pushed right on in eager haste.  
I felt a light touch suddenly,  
Looked down in dread and lo! 'twas she.

And how could she have passed the line?  
And why? I thought her surely crazed;  
Or, may be, sadly hurt and dazed,  
And took her little hand in mine.  
I led her up the shallow sand  
Against the somber, wooded land  
To where the mango, tamarind  
And black, wide-rooted banyan tree  
Reached out to ward and welcome me.

I was so worn, so weak and worn  
My dripping hands hung down as lead.  
I could not lift my sinking head;  
I heard the widowed mothers mourn,

Still heard that hoarse dog bark and beat  
And knew they would not now retreat.

## XVIII

And yet I could not lift a hand,  
But drooped and sank upon the sand.  
I tried, I tried, I could not rise,  
I could not open my dull eyes.  
And all the time that dog kept on,  
A dog that never would be gone!

It made me sleep, it made me dream—  
That drum seemed some deep orchestra  
Where I could see sweet players play,  
Low-voiced; then sudden all did seem  
A coarse and cruel tragedy.  
Red lightning lit the ample stage;  
Black thunder thrust italics through  
The bloody text, then in his rage,  
As if not knowing what to do,  
Turned back and hewed with such mad stroke  
My mighty trees that I awoke.

How I had slept! just clay and clod.  
For all the living, all the dead,  
The might, the majesty of God,  
The hideous, haunting death, the dread—  
I could but hear that monodin,  
That monster alligator skin  
Right on, right on, dog-like and deep,  
And sleep right on, and sleep and sleep!

I thrust, thrust hard out either hand:  
All still, all chill! I was alone!

## WALKER IN NICARAGUA

---

And she had sold me, my command!  
At sun the sacrificial stone;  
And then no more that horrid drum—  
Why had she gone? where had she gone?  
I tried to hope she yet might come—  
The while that drum beat on and on!

A finger to her lip, then sand  
She plucked and let it sift and run  
And pointed sunward, ere the sun!  
So many? and they come so soon?  
The sky was spotted, rain and moon,  
But with the first cloud we were gone;  
The while that bull-dog barked right on!

He, waiting, leaned and caught her hand,  
She stooped, took up, let fall the sand  
Then pointed sunward, ere the sun—  
A sign, and that brave, worn, guard line,  
Swift, single file, still as the dead,  
They passed with mournful, martial tread,  
Paced back that midnight track again,  
A piteous line of blood and pain:  
Yet not one man there to repine,  
Not one impatient word, not one.

## XIX

He paused, the last man to retreat,  
When all had silent passed the dead,  
He stood with bowed, uncovered head,  
Devoutest hero of defeat.  
And then he turned, hat still in hand,  
And bowed before her, low, so low  
He almost touched her sandaled feet,

And gently beckoned she should go:  
She stirred not and he spake command.

I had not known she was so tall,  
Knew not that she was nobly born  
Until I saw her black eyes burn  
And instant take command of all  
In that long, sudden, sad return,  
So silent, drooping and forlorn.

She beckoned him and he obeyed,  
Kneeled only as brave men can kneel,  
Up rose; and then the clank of steel,  
The eager clutching of a blade—  
And then the sullen tread and tread:  
That baying dog behind—the dead!

XX

She stripped the gold hoops from each hand  
From wrists, from arms and nothing said,  
But laid them gently by the dead:  
Then beckoned quiet, quick command.

“Pass on, on, on, at any cost,  
Not one brief moment to be lost!”  
Then on, on, on, fast and more fast,  
And she, alone, the very last,  
Until, just at the break of day—  
Were ever bugle notes so clear?  
Was ever dinner-horn so dear?  
We heard, we heard our horses neigh!

CHANT III

I

More marches through brown mesa, wood,  
More marches through too much blood,  
And then at last sweet inland seas.  
A city there, white-walled, and brown  
With age, in nest of orange trees;  
And this we won and many a town  
And rancho reaching up and down,  
Then rested long, sweet, sultry days  
Beneath the blossom'd orange trees,  
Made drowsy with the hum of bees,  
And drank in peace the south-sea breeze,  
Made sweet with sweeping bough of bays.

II

\* \* \* \*

Aye, she was shy, so shy at first,  
And then, ere long, not over shy,  
Yet pure of soul and proudly chare.  
No love on earth has such an eye!  
No land there is, is bless'd or curs'd  
With such a limb or grace of face,  
Or gracious form or genial air!  
In all the bleak North-land not one  
Hath been so warm of soul to me  
As coldest soul by that warm sea,  
Beneath the bright, hot centered sun.

III

No lands where northern ices are  
Approach, or even dare compare  
With warm loves born beneath the sun—  
The one so near, the one so far!  
The one the cold, white, steady star,  
The yellow, shifting sun the one.

IV

I grant you fond, I grant you fair,  
I grant you honor, trust and truth,  
And years as beautiful as youth,  
And many years beneath the sun,  
And faith as fixed as any star;  
But all the North-land hath not one  
So warm of soul as sun-maids are.

V

I was but in my boyhood then—  
Nor knew the coarse, hard ways of men.  
I count my fingers over, so,  
And find it years and years ago;  
But I was tall and lithe and fair,  
With rippled tide of yellow hair,  
And prone to mellowness of heart,  
While she was tawny-red like wine,  
With black hair boundless as the night.  
As for the rest, I learned my part,  
At least was apt, and willing quite  
To learn, to listen, and incline  
To teacher warm and wise as mine.

VI

\* \* \* \* \*

O bright, bronzed maidens of the Sun!  
So fairer far to look upon  
Than curtains of King Solomon,  
Or Kedar's tents, or any one,  
Or any thing beneath the Sun!  
What followed then? What has been done,  
And said, and writ, and read, and sung?  
What will be writ and read again,  
While love is life and life remain,  
While maids will heed and men have tongue?

VII

What followed then? But let that pass.  
I hold one picture in my heart,  
Hung curtain'd, and not any part  
Of all its blood tint ever has  
Been looked upon by any one  
Beneath the broad, all-seeing sun.

VIII

Love well who will, love wise who can,  
But love, be loved, for God is love;  
Love pure, as cherubim above;  
Love maid, and hate not any man.  
Sit as sat we by orange tree,  
Beneath the broad bough and grape-vine  
Top-tangled in the tropic shine,  
Close face to face, close to the sea,  
And full of the red-centered sun,

With sweet sea-songs upon the soul,  
Rolled melody on melody,  
As echoes of deep organ's roll,  
And love, nor question any one.

IX

If God is love, is love not God?  
As high priests say, let prophets sing,  
Without reproach or reckoning;  
This much I say, knees knit to sod,  
And low voice lifted, questioning.

X

Let hearts be pure, let love be true,  
Let lips be luscious, love be red,  
Let earth in gold be garmented  
And tented in her tent of blue;  
Let goodly rivers glide between  
Their leaning willow walls of green,  
Let all things be filled of the sun,  
And full of warm winds of the sea,  
And I beneath my vine and tree  
Take rest, nor war with any one;  
Then I will thank God with full cause,  
Say this is well, is as it was.

XI

Let lips be red, for God has said  
Love is as one gold-garmented,  
And made them so for such a time,  
Therefore let lips be red, therefore  
Let love be ripe in ruddy prime,

Let hope beat high, let hearts be true,  
And you be wise thereat, and you  
Drink deep and ask not any more.

XII

Let red lips lift, proud curl'd to kiss,  
And round limbs lean and lift and reach  
In love too passionate for speech,  
Too full of blessedness and bliss  
For anything but this and this ;  
Let pure lips lean warm, kind to kiss ;  
Swoon in sweet love, while all the air  
Is redolent with balm of trees,  
And mellow with the song of bees,  
While birds sit singing everywhere—  
And you will have not any more  
Than I in boyhood, by that shore  
Of olives, had in years of yore.

XIII

Let men unclean think things unclean ;  
I swear tip-toed, with lifted hand,  
That we were pure as sea-wash'd sand,  
That not one coarse thought came between ;  
Believe or disbelieve who will,  
Unto the pure all things are pure,  
As for the rest, love can endure  
Alike your good will or your ill.

XIV

Aye, she was rich in blood and gold—  
More rich in love, grown over-bold

From its own consciousness of strength.  
How warm! Oh, not for any cause  
Could I declare how warm she was,  
In her brown beauty and hair's length.

XV

We loved in the sufficient sun,  
We lived in elements of fire,  
For love is fire, not fierce desire;  
Yet lived as pure as priest and nun.

XVI

We lay slow rocking by the bay  
In slim canoe beneath the crags  
Thick-topp'd with palms, like sweeping flags  
Between us and the burning day.  
The alligator's head lay low  
Or lifted from his rich rank fern,  
And watch'd us and the tide by turn,  
As we slow cradled to and fro.

XVII

And slow we cradled on till night,  
And told the old tale, overtold,  
As misers in recounting gold  
Each time to take a new delight.

XVIII

With her pure passion-given grace  
She drew her warm self close to me;  
And her two brown hands on my knee,

And her two black eyes in my face,  
She then grew sad and guessed at ill,  
And in the future seemed to see  
With woman's ken and prophecy,  
Yet proffer'd her devotion still.

XIX

And plaintive so she gave a sign,  
A token cut of virgin gold,  
That all her tribe should ever hold  
Its wearer as some one divine,  
Nor touch him with unkindly hand.  
And I in turn gave her a blade,  
A dagger, worn as well by maid  
As man, in that hot-temper'd land.

XX

It had a massive silver hilt,  
It had a keen and cunning blade,  
A gift of chief and comrades made  
For blood at Rivas reckless spilt.

XXI

“Show this,” said I, “too well 'tis known,  
And worth a hundred lifted spears,  
Should ill beset your sunny years;  
There is not one in Walker's band,  
But at the sight of this alone,  
Will reach a brave and ready hand  
And make your right, or wrong, his own.”

XXII

Love while 'tis day; night cometh soon,  
Wherein no man or maiden may;  
Love in the strong young prime of day;  
Drink drunk with love in ripe red noon,  
Red noon of love and life and sun;  
Walk in love's light as in sunshine,  
Drink in that sun as drinking wine,  
Drink swift, nor question any one;  
For fortunes change, like man, or moon,  
And wane like warm full day of June.

XXIII

Oh Love, so fair of promises,  
Bend here thy bow, blow here thy kiss,  
Bend here thy bow above the storm  
But once, if only this once more!  
Comes there no patient Christ to save,  
Touch and reanimate thy form  
Long three days dead and in the grave?  
Yea, spread ye now thy silken net;  
Since fortunes change, turn and forget,  
Since man must fall for some sharp sin,  
Be thou the pit that I fall in;  
I seek no safer fall than this.

XXIV

You lift your face to ask of her,  
This wine-hued woman, warm sun-maid,  
This wine-hued woman warm as wine,  
So purely and so surely mine,  
Who loved, who dared, was not afraid—

Or Princess? Priestess? Prisoner?  
I never knew or sought to know;  
I cared not what she might have been;  
I only knew she was such queen  
As only death could overthrow.

XXV

Aye, lover, would you love with zest,  
Win, hold, and hold her fast and well?  
Believe, believe the best the best  
Though she have singed her skirts in hell!  
Hold not one doubt, house just this thought—  
That she is all in all you sought.

I loved, loved purely, loved profound,  
I raised love's temple, round by round.  
I built my temple heavens high,  
Then shut the door, and she and I  
Forgot all things, all things save one,  
Beneath the hot path of the sun.

XXVI

I would I could forget, and yet  
I would not to my death forget.  
I reared my temple to the sky,  
That glad full moon, and laughed that I  
Could toy with lightning, till I found,  
Like some poor fool who toys with fire,  
And counts him stronger than desire,  
My temple burning to the ground.

XXVII

Aye, I had knelt, as priest might kneel  
Before his saint's shrine, all that day;  
Had dared to count me strong as steel  
To stand for aye, clean, tall and white.  
Yet I broke in that very night,  
And stole shewbread and wine away.

XXVIII

I would forget that scene, that place,  
I would forget that pleading face,  
Yet hide it deepest in my heart,  
As coffin in the heart of earth—  
Alas! a heart so little worth—  
Locked iron doors and somber lid!  
Yea, I would have my shrine so hid,  
So sacred and so set apart,  
That only I might enter in,  
Each sleepless, penitential night,  
And, kneeling, burn my lorn love light  
To burn away my bitter sin.

XXIX

Love lifts on white wings to the gates  
Of Paradise and enters in:  
Lust has for wings two leaden weights  
That sink into the lake of sin.  
Lust squats, toad-like, his loathsome cell,  
Love seeks the light, on, on, above;  
Love is as God, as God is love,  
But lust is Lucifer in hell.

XXX

\* \* \* \*

Ills come not singly, birds of prey  
Flock not more closely on than they;  
Ill comes disguised in many forms;  
Fair winds are but a prophecy  
Of foulest winds full soon to be—  
The brighter these, the blacker they;  
The brightest night has darkest day  
And brightest days bring blackest storms.

XXXI

\* \* \* \*

A land-lost sea with sable bedes,  
Save where some bastions still are seen,  
A river stealing through the reeds,  
Dark, silent, sinuous, serpentine,  
In sullen haste toward the sun—  
Such lonesome land, such lonesome sea,  
Such wine-hued women at the oar,  
In silent pairs along the shore!  
But not one man in sight, not one  
To draw machete or bear a gun.

XXXII

A shaft of flame, a lifted torch,  
Leaps sudden from this midland sea,  
As if to light the very porch  
Of God's high house eternally.  
It drops its ashen embers slow

And slantwise, like belated snow,  
On granite columns, gods of stone  
Hewn ere the gods of Baal were known.

XXXIII

Some sweet brown hills, like Galilee,  
Group here or there this dark, still sea,  
Some costly woods, mahogany,  
Red cedar, like to Lebanon,  
Broad olives, like Gethsemane;  
But silence sits all things upon,  
As in some dark, hushed house of death.  
You look behind, you would turn back,  
You question if you yet take breath.  
The blackness of this silent sea  
Is oiled and burnished ebony—  
The very silence turns to black.

XXXIV

The silence is as when your dead  
Lies waiting, candles foot and head,  
When mourners turn them slowly back  
With all their sad, sweet prayers said.  
The sea is black, the shore is black  
Below Granada's storied steep,  
Save where red trumpet blossoms blow  
And trumpet, trumpet night and day,  
For brave brown soldiers far away  
In battle for this dreamful deep  
Where silent women come and go.

XXXV

Such wine-hued women! such soft eyes!  
What need one single word be said?  
A fool might talk and talk all day,  
Talk, talk and talk until he dies,  
And yet, for all his hard, loud lies,  
Will never make one inch advance,  
Will never say, year and a day,  
So much as she in one warm glance.

XXXVI

I see sad mothers here and there  
Sit by and braid their heavy hair,  
The while they watch their babes at play.  
I note no fear, I hear no sigh,  
Not even hear a baby cry;  
But Oh! Madonna, mother, bride,  
Dark mourning with your ebon tide,  
My heart is with you here today,  
As yours is with him far away.

XXXVII

Yet is this sea not always so:  
I've seen him laughing in the sun,  
Seen soft brown wavelets leap and flow,  
Seen opal dimples come and go,  
Seen argent billows rise and run,  
Seen fleets of gay boats lifting, borne  
Along his leaping, laughing tide  
In all their semi-savage pride.  
But list! the sea, the shore, is black

For those who passed and came not back—  
He mourns because his daughters mourn.

XXXVIII

Yon solitary cone of flame  
That lifts mid-sea to light the skies?  
I nothing know, scarce know the name,  
Of yon lost, buried town that lies  
Beneath its ashes, yet I know  
The story is, a pretty town,  
With people passing up and down,  
Lies just beyond, and deep, so deep  
That never plummet breaks its sleep.

XXXIX

And, too, the tale is we are dead  
And cast forth unto burning hell,  
While they, down there, live, laugh instead;  
That with them, down there, all is well,  
The while they dance all night, all day—  
While we are dead and cast in hell.

XL

Aye, idle talk, and yet the town  
Is there, and perfect, to this day.  
Row out, far out, and peer you down,  
A half mile down, some sultry noon,  
And see shapes passing up and down,  
As dancers dancing to a tune  
On some fair, happy day in May.

XLI

Aye, idle talk, and maybe these,  
The dancers, be but kelp adrift  
With undertow of under-seas—  
Strange under-seas that fall or lift  
And voiceless ever ebb and flow  
Beneath the burning crater's plain  
Through unknown channels to the main;  
I only note the things I know  
And loved and lived long years ago.

XLII

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Then came reverses to our arms;  
I saw the signal light's alarms  
All night red-crescenting the bay.  
The foe poured down a flood next day  
As strong as tides when tides are high,  
And drove us to the open sea,  
In such wild haste of flight that we  
Had hardly time to arm and fly.

XLIII

Far tossed upon the broadest sea,  
I lifted my two hands on high,  
With wild soul plashing to the sky,  
And cried, "O more than crowns to me,  
Farewell at last to love and thee!"

I walked the deck, I kissed my hand  
Back to the far and fading shore,  
And bent a knee as to implore,  
Until the last dark head of land  
Slid down behind the dimpled sea.  
At last I sank in troubled sleep,  
A very child, rocked by the deep,  
Sad questioning the fate of her  
Before the cruel conqueror.

XLIV

The loss of comrades, power, place,  
A city walled, cool, shaded ways,  
Cost me no care at all, somehow,  
I only saw her sad, sweet face,  
And—I was younger then than now.

XLV

Red flashed the sun across the deck,  
Slow flapped the idle sail, and slow  
The black ship cradled to and fro.  
Afar my city lay, a speck  
Of white against a line of blue;  
Hard by, half-lounging on the deck,  
Some comrades chatted, two by two.  
I held a new-filled glass of wine,  
And with the Mate talked as in play  
Of fierce events of yesterday,  
To coax his light life into mine.

## XLVI

He jerked the wheel, as slow he said,  
Low laughing with averted head,  
And so half sad: "You bet, they'll fight;  
They followed in canim, canoe,  
A perfect fleet, that on the blue  
Lay dancing till the mid of night.  
Would you believe! one little cuss—"  
(He turned his hard head slow sidewise  
And 'neath his hat-rim took the skies)—  
"In petticoats did follow us  
The livelong night, and at the dawn  
Her boat lay rocking in the lee,  
Scarce one short pistol-shot from me."  
This said the mate, half mournfully,  
Then pecked at us; for he had drawn,  
By bright light heart and homely wit,  
A knot of men around the wheel,  
Which he stood whirling like a reel,  
For the still ship reck'd not of it.

## XLVII

"And where's she now?" one careless said,  
With eyes slow lifting to the brine,  
Swift swept the instant far by mine,  
The bronze mate listed, shook his head,  
Spirited a stream of ambier wide  
Across and over the ship side,  
Jerked at the wheel and slow replied:  
"She had a dagger in her hand,  
She rose, she raised it, tried to stand,  
But fell, and so upset herself;  
Yet still the poor brown, pretty elf,

Each time the long, light wave would toss  
And lift her form from out the sea,  
Would shake a sharp, bright blade at me,  
With rich hilt chased a cunning cross.  
At last she sank, but still the same  
She shook her dagger in the air,  
As if to still defy or dare,  
And sinking seemed to call your name."

XLVIII

I let the wine glass crashing fall,  
I rushed across the deck, and all  
The sea I swept and swept again,  
With lifted hand, with eye and glass,  
But all was idle and in vain.  
I saw a red-billed sea bird pass,  
A petrel sweeping 'round and 'round,  
I heard the far, white sea-surf sound,  
But no sign could I hear or see  
Of one so more than all to me.

XLIX

I cursed the ship, the shore, the sea,  
The brave brown mate, the bearded men;  
I had a fever then, and then  
Ship, shore and sea were one to me:  
And weeks we on the dead waves lay,  
And I more truly dead than they.

L

At last some rested on an isle;  
The few strong-breasted, with a smile,

Returning to the hostile shore,  
Scarce counting of the pain or cost,  
Scarce recking if they won or lost;  
They sought but action, asked no more;  
They counted life but as a game,  
With full per cent against them, and  
Staked all upon a single hand,  
And lost or won, content the same.

LI

I never saw my chief again,  
I never sought again the shore,  
Or saw the wood-walled city more.  
I could not bear the more than pain  
At sight of blossom'd orange trees,  
Or blended song of birds and bees,  
The sweeping shadows of the palm  
Or spicy breath of bay and balm.

LII

And, striving to forget the while,  
I wandered through a dreary isle,  
Here black with juniper, and there  
Made white with goats in shaggy coats,  
The only things that anywhere  
We found with life in all the land,  
Save birds that ran, long-bill'd and brown,  
Long-legg'd and still as shadows are,  
Like dancing shadows, up and down  
The sea-rim on the swelt'ring sand.

LIII

The warm sea laid his dimpled face,  
With all his white locks smoothed in place,  
As if asleep against the land;  
Great turtles slept upon his breast,  
As thick as eggs in any nest;  
I could have touched them with my hand.

LIV

I would some things were dead and hid,  
Well dead and buried deep as hell,  
With recollection dead as well,  
And resurrection God-forbid.  
They irk me with their weary spell  
Of fascination, eye to eye,  
And hot, mesmeric, serpent-hiss,  
Through all the dull, eternal days.  
Let them turn by, go on their ways,  
Let them depart or let me die;  
For life is but a beggar's lie,  
And as for death, I grin at it;  
I do not care one whiff or whit  
Whether it be or that or this.

LV

I give my hand; the world is wide;  
Then farewell, memories of yore!  
Between us let strife be no more;  
Turn as you choose to either side;  
Say Fare-you-well, shake hands and say—  
Speak fair, and say with stately grace,

Hand clutching hand, face bent to face—  
Farewell, forever and a day!

LVI

O passion-toss'd and piteous past,  
Part now, part well, part wide apart,  
As ever ships on ocean slid  
Down, down the sea, hull, sail and mast;  
And in the album of your heart  
Let hide the pictures of your face,  
With other pictures in their place,  
Slid over, like a coffin's lid.

LVII

The days and grass grow long together;  
They now fell short and crisp again,  
And all the fair face of the main  
Grew dark and wrinkled as the weather.  
Through all the summer sun's decline  
Fell news of triumphs and defeats,  
Of hard advances, hot retreats—  
Then days and days and not a line.

LVIII

At last one night they came. I knew,  
Ere yet the boat had touched the land,  
That all was lost; they were so few  
I near could count them on one hand;  
But he, the leader, led no more.  
The proud chief still disdained to fly,  
But like one wrecked, clung to the shore,  
And struggled on, and struggling fell

From power to a prison cell,  
And only left that cell to die.

LIX

My recollection, like a ghost,  
Goes from this sea to that sea-side,  
Goes and returns, as turns the tide,  
Then turns again unto the coast.  
I know not which I mourn the most,  
My chief or my unwedded wife.  
The one was as the lordly sun,  
To joy in, bask in and admire;  
The twilight star was as the one  
To love, to look to and desire,  
And both a part of my young life.

LX

\* \* \* \* \*

Years after, sheltered from the sun  
Beneath a Sacramento bay,  
A black Muchacho by me lay  
Along the long grass crisp and dun,  
His brown mule browsing by his side,  
And told with all a Peon's pride  
How he once fought; how long and well,  
Brave breast to breast, red hand to hand,  
Against a foe for his fair land,  
And how the fierce invader fell;  
And, artless, told me how he died;  
How walked he from the prison-wall,  
Serene, prince-like, as for parade,  
And made no note of man or maid,

But gazed out calmly over all—  
How looked he far, half paused, and then  
Above the mottled sea of men  
Slow kissed his thin hand to the sun;  
Then smiled so proudly none had known  
But he was stepping to a throne.

LXI

A nude brown beggar Peon child,  
Encouraged as the captive smiled,  
Looked up, half scared, half pitying;  
He stopped, he caught it from the sand,  
Put bright coins in its two brown hands,  
Then strode on like another king.

LXII

Two deep, a musket's length they stood  
Afront, in sandals, grim, and dun  
As death and darkness wove in one,  
Their thick lips thirsting for his blood.  
He took each black hand, one by one,  
And, bowing with a patient grace,  
Forgave them all and took his place.

LXIII

He bared his broad brow pleasantly,  
Gave one long, last look to the sky,  
The white-winged clouds that hurried by,  
The olive hills in orange hue;  
A last list to the cockatoo  
That hung by beak from mango-bough  
Hard by and hung and cried as though

He never was to call again,  
Hung all red-crowned and robed in green,  
With belts of gold and blue between.—

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

A bow, a touch of heart, a pall  
Of purple smoke, a crash, a thud,  
A warrior's raiment rolled in blood,  
A face in dust and—that was all.

Success had made him more than king;  
Defeat made him the vilest thing  
In name, contempt or hate can bring;  
So much the leaden dice of war  
Do make or mar of character.

#### LXIV

Speak ill who will of him, he died  
In all disgrace, say of the dead  
His heart was black, his hands were red—  
Say this much and be satisfied;  
Gloat over it all undenied.  
I simply say he was my friend  
When strong of hand and fair of fame:  
Dead and disgraced, I stand the same  
To him, and so shall to the end.

#### LXV

I lay this crude wreath on his dust,  
Inwove with sad, sweet memories

Recall'd here by these colder seas.  
I leave the wild bird with his trust,  
To sing and say him nothing wrong;  
I wake no rivalry of song.

### LXVI

He lies low in the level'd sand,  
Unshelter'd from the tropic sun,  
And now, of all he knew, not one  
Will speak him fair in that far land.  
Perhaps 'twas this that made me seek,  
Disguised, his grave one winter-tide,  
A weakness for the weaker side,  
A siding with the helpless weak.

### LXVII

His warm Hondurian seas are warm,  
Warm to the heart, warm all the time;  
Huge sea-beasts wallow in their slime  
And slide, claw foot and serpent form,  
Slow down the bank, and bellow deep  
And pitiful, as if it were  
A very pain to even stir,  
So close akin to death they keep.

### LXVIII

The low sea bank is worn and torn,  
All things seem old, so very old;  
All things are gray with moss and mould,  
The very seas seem old and worn.  
Life scarce bides here in any form,  
The very winds wake not nor say,

But sleep all night and sleep all day  
Nor even dream of stress or storm.

LXIX

The Carib sea comes in so slow !  
It stays and stays, as loth to go,  
A sense of death is in the air,  
A sense of listless, dull despair,  
As if Truxillo, land and tide,  
And all things, died when Walker died.

LXX

A palm not far held out a hand,  
Hard by a long green bamboo swung,  
And bent like some great bow unstrung,  
And quiver'd like a willow wand ;  
Perched on its fruits that crooked hang,  
Beneath a broad banana's leaf,  
A bird in rainbow splendor sang  
A low, sad song of temper'd grief.

LXXI

No sod, no sign, no cross nor stone  
But at his side a cactus green  
Upheld its lances long and keen ;  
It stood in sacred sands alone,  
Flat-palmed and fierce with lifted spears ;  
One bloom of crimson crowned its head,  
A drop of blood, so bright, so red,  
Yet redolent as roses' tears.

## LXXII

In my left hand I held a shell,  
All rosy-lipp'd and pearly red;  
I laid it by his lowly bed,  
For he did love so passing well  
The grand songs of his solemn sea.  
O shell! sing well, wild, with a will,  
When storms blow loud and birds be still,  
The wildest sea-song known to thee!

## LXXIII

I said some things with folded hands,  
Soft whisper'd in the dim sea-sound,  
And eyes held humbly to the ground,  
And frail knees sunken in the sands.  
He had done more than this for me,  
And yet I could not well do more;  
I turned me down the olive shore,  
And set a sad face to the sea.

---

General William Walker, citizen, soldier, president and historian of Nicaragua, was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1824, of Scotch ancestry, and educated at a university in Paris, after which he studied international law in London. He voyaged to California in 1850 and, after some experience in the gold mines and gathering many bold men about him he became editor of the San Francisco Herald and began to publish his plans to his followers. He made two bold attempts to establish a settlement in Baja California, but was twice driven out by the Mexicans. Returning to California he raised a company and sailed for Nicaragua. War had been raging there for a long time between the aristocrats, or church party, of Granada, and the Democrats of Leon, to the north. Americans as well as British were fighting on both sides.

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Colonel Doubleday, whose book on the subject is worth reading, was in the field long before Walker, who went into the country by special invitation from the president of the Democrats, whose capital was at Leon. Here, Doubleday, an Englishman by birth, joined Walker and, so far as he could, kept at his side to the end.

Doubleday says Walker was ambitious, and that in many quiet walks along the silvery beach of Lake Nicaragua he told him of vast plans of conquest, to include Honduras, Mexico and all Central America. And yet, Doubleday, in this same book, tells us that Walker was morose, reserved and had no confidants.

True, these accusations were made and published broadcast over the world right along and were not denied; but from Colonel Doubleday's own account of Walker's character he would certainly be the last man to tell the Colonel, or any one else, of any such fatal purpose. I know that I never heard a hint of it from him or any one near him. Still, we must ascribe his downfall to these stories; for he had hardly been seated in the Presidential chair when he found not only the Church party of his own adopted country against him but every little neighboring republic in arms to expel him.

After fearful fighting at Granada, Walker, shut up in Rivas, surrendered to the United States and was taken to New Orleans for trial, his men going whither they would or could.

He now published an elaborate book, giving the wealth and wonderful resources of the country and, at the same time, giving every detail of the war, under the title of *The War in Nicaragua*. It is written in the third person, like the books of the first Cæsar, and is as conservative and exact as an equation.

He was tried in New Orleans and, on his vindication, raised in that city and Mobile a force far exceeding that with which he had left California and with which he had fought his way to the presidency; but his Californians were dead or scattered, and these untried men of enervating cities knew little of arms and were, comparatively, worthless.

Walker's last expedition was closely watched by British gun-boats. He took refuge up a river on the coast of Honduras and soon found himself cut off on all sides. He led his men up the coast and down, facing fifty to one, as at Rivas and Granada, but they soon became disheartened and he surrendered to the captain of a British man-of-war, who at once turned him over to Honduras, when he was promptly tried at the drum's head, condemned and shot.

## WALKER IN NICARAGUA

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General Walker was the cleanest man in word and deed I ever knew. He never used tobacco in any form, never drank anything at all, except water, and always ate most sparingly. He never jested and I cannot recall that I ever saw him smile. He was very thin of flesh and of most impressive presence, especially when on the firing line. At such times he was simply terrible; his gray eyes expanding and glittering like broken steel with the rage of battle. He was, in the eyes of his devoted Californians, truly "The bravest of the brave." The manner of his death showed not only the true courage but the serene Christian peace and dignity of this "gray-eyed man of destiny."

The priest who attended him in his last moments told me that Walker had no sooner been put in prison than he sent for his spiritual adviser. He knew his fate beforehand.

"Father, my political career is ended and I wish to prepare to die."

And even as he spoke to the priest an officer with a platoon of executioners entered the prison to inform him that he was sentenced to be shot. Walker had disdained to make any show of defense for himself, but begged to the last moment that his followers should not be made to suffer. "My men knew nothing of my sudden resolve to reach Nicaragua by way of Truxillo when I found I could not escape the British gunboat. I alone am to blame. I was wrong in making war upon Honduras."

His dress, language and bearing were those of a clergyman, when not on the firing line, and his whole time was spent in reading. He never wasted a moment in idle talk, never took advice but always gave commands, and they must be obeyed. On entering a town he, as a rule, issued a proclamation making death the penalty alike for insulting a woman, for theft or for entering a church save as a Christian should. He lived and died a devout Catholic.

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

"If you will open my heart when I am dead you will see Calais burned there; burned in the very heart of my heart."

I have no warrant for saying that plans for the Nicaraguan canal crowded in upon the last moments of General Walker, for I was not with him in this last expedition, but I know that this one colossal idea towered over, and high above, all his other plans from the first, and even after his surrender to Lieutenant

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Davis, of the United States Navy, at Rivas. His work as general of the Nicaraguan forces, his plans as President of Nicaragua, all honors, all things that came to him he reckoned as nothing in comparison with this one purpose. The trans-continental canal would make not only Mexico and all the lesser republics tributary to Nicaragua, but all the civilized world as well. He was well known personally in Paris and London, where his position and credit were of the best. He was looked upon in better Europe, not as an adventurer, but as a wise, well-meaning and far-seeing soldier and statesman. America was comparatively poor at that time, and, especially the northern part, hostile to his plans for the betterment of Nicaragua. So it was that he planned and arranged wholly with foreign capital for moneys to do the work. I am not certain that I know exactly, at this remote date, but I feel almost certain that the Rothschilds were to finance the canal and at the same time control the great quicksilver mines in California.

I am quite certain, however, that General Walker proposed to bring out many ship loads of the strong Celt, Saxon, and North Sea people to do the work, serve as soldiers and then help populate and civilize the richest and most favored spot of all this earth. I remember how carefully he noted that the health of his men, who were made to take care of themselves, was so much better than that of the native soldiers, who ate and drank, when they ate at all, whatever came to hand. Indeed, it would seem as if we were once miraculously saved from annihilation by breaking out of cholera in the enemy's camp, not ten miles distant.

The first real work towards the trans-continental canal was done by George Squier, our Minister to Peru; seconded by Stevens, another learned, able, and enterprising engineer. Five different routes were surveyed, or at least shown to be possible.

The first chapters in the story of the great canal, after these two able men had done their work and gone their ways, are far from complimentary to either the wisdom or the worth of most of those concerned.

At last the French took hold of the idea, but a treacherous Nicaraguan, high in authority, was bribed and to the consternation and disgust of all who knew anything about the resources and glory of Nicaragua, Panama was preferred. Of course America will now soon complete it. But we must do more than complete the Panama Canal.

As a dying queen proffered millions of money for a moment

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of time, so Commerce, as she comes to possess her full estate, will pay billions of money for a single day, if need be. The Nicaragua route is more than a day shorter in the circuit of the world, as well as between the most important parts. The changeless and all-conquering laws of trade will compel the use of the shorter route; whoever may be its owners.

But there is something more than time and trade in the proposition. The world is learning at last to say with Socrates, "Know thyself": the world wants to see the world and to see it at its best and to see it in its sublimest aspect and place. And the one sublimest place on the face of the earth is the mountains, the forests and the inland seas of Nicaragua. The five mountains of eternal fires beyond Leon, the gleaming, bottomless and flower-hung lakes, the sinuous and forest-swept rivers, the rainbow birds, monstrous reptiles of land and sea, blossoming trees heavy with perfume where mountains of snow and of flame look down on you as you sail by—these the world will see and know at whatever cost, as it comes to its own and comes to know itself. There is grandeur of scene in Canada as you glide by over the iron spans; but it is monotonously grand and cold and lifeless. The gleaming snow peaks of the Oregon Sierra, with their verdant fields, lowing herds and responsive human life, make a good second, but these two most favored parts of scenery under the northern path of the sun are so entirely surpassed by the endless summers in Nicaragua as to make any sort of comparison quite impossible. And so it results that the civilized and seeing world must and will pass that way, as surely as the crowding and ever-conquering battleships of commerce must and will lead that way.

If the Panama route proves to be a success, the Nicaragua route will be at once begun. If it proves a failure, this Nicaraguan route must and will be at once pushed to conclusion.

And who will build it? England? France? Germany? Russia? Japan? It matters not which of the three or four or five. But Russia, with her millions of money and men and her burning jealousy of the Island Empire, might try to build it; or even Japan with her brave ambition and steel-built walls. And we could and would plead the Monroe Doctrine and fight any one or all of them? We could and would do nothing of the sort. There is a precedent to the contrary. We allowed France to embark in the costly venture and we could not now refuse a like courtesy to any other nation, even if we would. Besides, this Monroe Doctrine is a chain of "glittering generalities" which

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we have been shaking in the ears of the world without ever having tested its strength in the least. The strongest chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The boldest man in the century just behind us said, "I consider the Monroe Doctrine only a bit of idle bluster."

Then since by earthquakes, sudden floods, tidal waves and uncertain sea levels we may fail at Panama and so tempt some foreign power to invade Nicaragua, and since our success would be a tenfold temptation, what should we do but at once secure the right of way to ourselves, from Nicaragua, and so insure peace and prosperity to all before other nations step in. Cast bread on the waters here and it will surely return an hundred-fold. When we were building the first Pacific railroad no one ever dreamed we would need a second one. But we are building others right along. We must control the second Darien Canal.

A great canal must and will be built across Nicaragua. And we this great republic, with its millions and billions, must build it. We have more than a right. We have a Duty!

Nicaragua is a healthy country. The water is good, the wood abundant and the people industrious, able and willing to do all the work, so there need be no loss of time or great loss of life in its construction.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

*Shadows that shroud the tomorrow,  
Glists from the life that's within,  
Traces of pain and of sorrow,  
And maybe a trace of sin,  
Reachings for God in the darkness,  
And for—what should have been.*

*Stains from the gall and the wormwood,  
Memories bitter like myrrh,  
A sad brown face in a fir wood,  
Blotches of heart's blood here,  
But never the sound of a wailing,  
Never the sign of a tear.*

Where mountains repose in their blueness,  
Where the sun first lands in his newness,  
And marshals his beams and his lances,  
Ere down to the vale he advances  
With visor erect, and rides swiftly  
On the terrible night in his way,  
And slays him, and, dauntless and deftly,  
Hews out the beautiful day  
With his flashing sword of silver,—  
Lay nestled the town of Renalda,  
Far famed for its stately Alcalde,  
The iron judge of the mountain mine,  
With heart like the heart of woman,  
Humanity more than human;—  
Far famed for its gold and silver,  
Fair maid and its mountain wine.

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The feast was full, and the guests afire,  
The shaven priest and the portly squire,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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The solemn judge and the smiling dandy,  
The duke and the don and the commandante,  
All, save one, shouted or sang divine,  
Sailing in one great sea of wine;  
Till roused, red-crested knight Chanticleer  
Answer'd and echo'd their song and cheer.

Some boasted of broil, encounter, in battle,  
Some boasted of maidens most cleverly won,  
Boasted of duels most valiantly done,  
Of leagues of land and of herds of cattle,  
These men at the feast up in fair Renalda.  
All boasted but one, the calm Alcalde:  
Though hard they press'd from first of the feast,  
Press'd commandanté, press'd poet and priest,  
And steadily still an attorney press'd,  
With lifted glass and his face aglow,  
Heedless of host and careless of guest —  
“A tale! the tale of your life, so ho!  
For not one man in all Mexico  
Can trace your history two decade.”  
A hand on the rude one's lip was laid:  
“Sacred, my son,” the priest went on,  
“Sacred the secrets of every one,  
Inviolate as an altar-stone.  
Yet what in the life of one who must  
Have lived a life that is half divine—  
Have been so pure to be so just,  
What can there be, O advocate,  
In the life of one so desolate  
Of luck with matron, or love with maid,  
Midnight revel or escapade,  
To stir the wonder of men at wine?  
But should the Alcalde choose, you know,”—  
(And here his voice fell soft and low,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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As he set his wine-horn in its place,  
And look'd in the judge's care-worn face)—  
“To weave us a tale that points a moral  
Out of his vivid imagination,  
Of lass or of love, or lover's quarrel,  
Naught of his fame or name or station  
Shall lose in luster by its relation.”

Softly the judge set down his horn,  
Kindly look'd on the priest all shorn,  
And gazed in the eyes of the advocate  
With a touch of pity, but none of hate;  
Then look'd he down in the brimming horn,  
Half defiant and half forlorn.

Was it a tear? Was it a sigh?  
Was it a glance of the priest's black eye?  
Or was it the drunken revel-cry  
That smote the rock of his frozen heart  
And forced his pallid lips apart?  
Or was it the weakness like to woman  
Yearning for sympathy  
Through the dark years,  
Spurning the secrecy,  
Burning for tears,  
Proving him human,—  
As he said to the men of the silver mine,  
With their eyes held up as to one divine,  
With his eyes held down to his untouch'd wine:

“It might have been where moonbeams kneel  
At night beside some rugged steep;  
It might have been where breakers reel,  
Or mild waves cradle men to sleep;  
It might have been in peaceful life,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

Or mad tumult and storm and strife,  
I drew my breath; it matters not.  
A silver'd head, a sweetest cot,  
A sea of tamarack and pine,  
A peaceful stream, a balmy clime,  
A cloudless sky, a sister's smile,  
A mother's love that sturdy Time  
Has strengthen'd as he strengthens wine,  
Are mine, are with me all the while,  
Are hung in memory's sounding halls,  
Are graven on her glowing walls.  
But rage, nor rack, nor wrath of man,  
Nor prayer of priest, nor price, nor ban  
Can wring from me their place or name,  
Or why, or when, or whence I came;  
Or why I left that childhood home,  
A child of form yet old of soul,  
And sought the wilds where tempests roll  
O'er snow peaks white as driven foam.

“Mistaken and misunderstood,  
I sought a deeper wild and wood.  
A girlish form, a childish face,  
A wild waif drifting from place to place.

“Oh for the skies of rolling blue,  
The balmy hours when lovers woo,  
When the moon is doubled as in desire,  
And the lone bird cries in his crest of fire,  
Like vespers calling the soul to bliss  
In the blessed love of the life above,  
Ere it has taken the stains of this!

“The world afar, yet at my feet,  
Went steadily and sternly on;

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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I almost fancied I could meet  
The crush and bustle of the street,  
When from my mountain I look'd down.  
And deep down in the cañon's mouth  
The long-tom ran and pick-ax rang,  
And pack-trains coming from the south  
Went stringing round the mountain high  
In long gray lines, as wild geese fly,  
While mul'teers shouted hoarse and high,  
And dusty, dusky mul'teers sang—  
'Senora with the liquid eye!  
No floods can ever quench the flame,  
Or frozen snows my passion tame,  
O Juanna with the coal-black eye!  
O senorita, bide a bye!'

"Environed by a mountain wall,  
That caped in snowy turrets stood;  
So fierce, so terrible, so tall,  
It never yet had been defiled  
By track or trail, save by the wild  
Free children of the wildest wood;  
An unkiss'd virgin at my feet,  
Lay my pure, hallow'd, dreamy vale,  
Where breathed the essence of my tale;  
Lone dimple in the mountain's face,  
Lone Eden in a boundless waste  
It lay so beautiful! so sweet!

"There in the sun's decline I stood  
By God's form wrought in pink and pearl,  
My peerless, dark-eyed Indian girl;  
And gazed out from a fringe of wood,  
With full-fed soul and feasting eyes,  
Upon an earthly paradise.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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Inclining to the south it lay,  
And long league's southward roll'd away,  
Until the sable-feather'd pines  
And tangled boughs and amorous vines  
Closed like besiegers on the scene,  
The while the stream that intertwined  
Had barely room to flow between.  
It was unlike all other streams,  
Save those seen in sweet summer dreams ;  
For sleeping in its bed of snow,  
Nor rock nor stone was ever known,  
But only shining, shifting sands,  
Forever sifted by unseen hands.  
It curved, it bent like Indian bow,  
And like an arrow darted through,  
Yet uttered not a sound nor breath,  
Nor broke a ripple from the start ;  
It was as swift, as still as death,  
Yet was so clear, so pure, so sweet,  
It wound its way into your heart  
As through the grasses at your feet.

“Once, through the tall untangled grass,  
I saw two black bears careless pass,  
And in the twilight turn to play ;  
I caught my rifle to my face,  
She raised her hand with quiet grace  
And said : ‘Not so, for us the day,  
The night belongs to such as they.’”

“And then from out the shadow'd wood  
The antler'd deer came stalking down  
In half a shot of where I stood ;  
Then stopp'd and stamp'd impatiently,  
Then shook his head and antlers high,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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And then his keen horns backward threw  
Upon his shoulders broad and broawn,  
And thrust his muzzle in the air,  
Snuff'd proudly; then a blast he blew  
As if to say: 'No danger there.'  
And then from out the sable wood  
His mate and two sweet dappled fawns  
Stole forth, and by the monarch stood,  
Such bronzes, as on kingly lawns;  
Or seen in picture, read in tale.  
Then he, as if to reassure  
The timid, trembling and demure,  
Again his antlers backward threw,  
Again a blast defiant blew,  
Then led them proudly down the vale.

"I watch'd the forms of darkness come  
Slow stealing from their sylvan home,  
And pierce the sunlight drooping low  
And weary, as if loth to go.  
Night stain'd the lances as he bled,  
And, bleeding and pursued, he fled  
Across the vale into the wood.  
I saw the tall grass bend its head  
Beneath the stately martial tread  
Of Shades, pursuer and pursued.

"'Behold the clouds,' Winnema said,  
'All purple with the blood of day;  
The night has conquer'd in the fray,  
The shadows live, and light is dead.'

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

“She turn’d to \*Shasta gracefully,  
Around whose hoar and mighty head  
Still roll’d a sunset sea of red,  
While troops of clouds a space below  
Were drifting wearily and slow,  
As seeking shelter for the night  
Like weary sea-birds in their flight;  
Then curved her right arm gracefully  
Above her brow, and bow’d her knee,  
And chanted in an unknown tongue  
Words sweeter than were ever sung.

“‘And what means this?’ I gently said.  
‘I prayed to God, the Yopitone,  
Who dwells on yonder snowy throne,’  
She softly said with drooping head;  
‘I bow’d to God. He heard my prayer,  
I felt his warm breath in my hair,

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\* The Sierra Madre range of mountains comes up to us from way down in Mexico. It passes on up toward the north in all its savage majesty and splendor until it melts into and blends in with the Sierra Nevada Mountains of the north, Sierra Nevada Mountains—mountains of snow; Sierra, series—saw teeth of snow, to be literal and exact.

Mount Shasta (Chasti), so named by the French, marked the limit of Spain (Mexico) to the north and the end of the Sierra de Nevada. But the Spanish and Portuguese explorers sailing up the Oregon River gave this same great range of mountains coming up from their Mexico the same name—Sierra—with the deserved additional name, Grande del Nord—Sierra Grande del Nord. This mighty mountain range is finally lost in Canada and Alaska. If you want to speak of any one of these particular divisions you say Sierra this or Sierra that. But the custom, which has become a law, is to say the Sierras when you want to speak of these mountains as a body.

The one sublimest mountain view of all the Sierras is the summit and center of the park in the city of Portland, Ore. Here they have seven great snow peaks right at your feet.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

He heard me all my wishes tell,  
For God is good, and all is well.'

"The dappled and the dimpled skies,  
The timid stars, the spotted moon,  
All smiled as sweet as sun at noon.  
Her eyes were like the rabbit's eyes,  
Her mien, her manner, just as mild,  
And though a savage war-chief's child,  
She would not harm the lowliest worm.  
And, though her beaded foot was firm,  
And though her airy step was true,  
She would not crush a drop of dew.

"Her love was deeper than the sea,  
And stronger than the tidal rise,  
And clung in all its strength to me.  
A face like hers is never seen  
This side the gates of paradise,  
Save in some Indian Summer scene,  
And then none ever sees it twice—  
Is seen but once, and seen no more,  
Seen but to tempt the skeptic soul,  
And show a sample of the whole  
That Heaven has in store.

"You might have plucked beams from  
the moon,  
Or torn the shadow from the pine  
When on its dial track at noon,  
But not have parted us one hour,  
She was so wholly, truly mine.  
And life was one unbroken dream  
Of purest bliss and calm delight,  
A flow'ry-shored, untroubled stream

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

Of sun and song, of shade and bower,  
A full-moon'd serenading night.

“Sweet melodies were in the air,  
And tame birds caroll'd everywhere.  
I listened to the lisping grove  
And cooing pink-eyed turtle dove,  
I loved her with the holiest love;  
Believing with a brave belief  
That everything beneath the skies  
Was beautiful and born to love,  
That man had but to love, believe,  
And earth would be a paradise  
As beautiful as that above.  
My goddess, Beauty, I adored,  
Devoutly, fervid, her alone;  
My Priestess, Love, unceasing pour'd  
Pure incense on her altar-stone.

“I carved my name in coarse design  
Once on a birch down by the way,  
At which she gazed, as she would say,  
‘What does this say? What is this sign?’  
And when I gaily said, ‘Some day  
Some one will come and read my name,  
And I will live in song and fame,  
Entwined with many a mountain tale,  
As he who first found this sweet vale,  
And they will give the place my name,’  
She was most sad, and troubled much,  
And looked in silence far away;  
Then started trembling from my touch,  
And when she turn'd her face again,  
I read unutterable pain.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

“At last she answered through her tears,  
‘Ah! yes; this, too, foretells my fears:  
Yes, they will come—my race must go  
As fades a vernal fall of snow;  
And you be known, and I forgot  
Like these brown leaves that rust and rot  
Beneath my feet; and it is well:  
I do not seek to thrust my name  
On those who here, hereafter, dwell,  
Because I have before them dwelt;  
They too will have their tales to tell,  
They too will have their time and fame.

“‘Yes, they will come, come even now;  
The dim ghosts on yon mountain’s brow,  
Gray Fathers of my tribe and race,  
Do beckon to us from their place,  
And hurl red arrows through the air  
At night, to bid our braves beware.  
A footprint by the clear McCloud,  
Unlike aught ever seen before,  
Is seen. The crash of rifles loud  
Is heard along its farther shore.’

\* \* \* \* \*

“What tall and tawny men were these,  
As somber, silent, as the trees  
They moved among! and sad some way  
With temper’d sadness, ever they,—  
Yet not with sorrow born of fear.  
The shadow of their destinies  
They saw approaching year by year,  
And murmur’d not. They saw the sun  
Go down; they saw the peaceful moon  
Move on in silence to her rest,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

Saw white streams winding to the west;  
And thus they knew that oversoon,  
Somehow, somewhere, for every one

Was rest beyond the setting sun.  
They knew not, never dream'd of doubt,  
But turn'd to death as to a sleep,  
And died with eager hands held out  
To reaching hands beyond the deep,—  
And died with choicest bow at hand,  
And quiver full, and arrow drawn  
For use, when sweet tomorrow's dawn  
Should waken in the Spirit Land.

“What wonder that I linger'd there  
With Nature's children! Could I part  
With those that met me heart to heart,  
And made me welcome, spoke me fair,  
Were first of all that understood  
My waywardness from others' ways,  
My worship of the true and good,  
And earnest love of Nature's God?  
Go court the mountains in the clouds,  
And clashing thunder, and the shrouds  
Of tempests, and eternal shocks,  
And fast and pray as one of old  
In earnestness, and ye shall hold  
The mysteries; shall hold the rod  
That passes seas, that smites the rocks  
Where streams of melody and song  
Shall run as white streams rush and flow  
Down from the mountains' crests of snow,  
Forever, to a thirsting throng.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

“Between the white man and the red  
There lies no neutral, halfway ground.  
I heard afar the thunder sound  
That soon should burst above my head,  
And made my choice; I laid my plan,  
And childlike chose the weaker side;  
And ever have, and ever will,  
While might is wrong and wrongs remain,  
As careless of the world as I  
Am careless of a cloudless sky.  
With wayward and romantic joy  
I gave my pledge like any boy,  
But kept my promise like a man,  
And lost; yet with the lesson still  
Would gladly do the same again.

“‘They come! they come! the pale-face come!’  
The chieftain shouted where he stood,  
Sharp watching at the margin wood,  
And gave the war-whoop’s treble yell,  
That like a knell on fond hearts fell  
Far watching from my rocky home.

“No nodding plumes or banners fair  
Unfurl’d or fretted through the air;  
No screaming fife or rolling drum  
Did challenge brave of soul to come:  
But, silent, sinew-bows were strung,  
And, sudden, heavy quivers hung  
And, swiftly, to the battle sprung  
Tall painted braves with tufted hair,  
Like death-black banners in the air.

“And long they fought, and firm and well  
And silent fought, and silent fell,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

Save when they gave the fearful yell  
Of death, defiance, or of hate.  
But what were feathered flints to fate?  
And what were yells to seething lead?  
And what the few and untrained feet  
To troops that came with martial tread,  
And moved by wood and hill and stream  
As thick as people in a street,  
As strange as spirits in a dream?

“From pine and poplar, here and there,  
A cloud, a flash, a crash, a thud,  
A warrior’s garments roll’d in blood,  
A yell that rent the mountain air  
Of fierce defiance and despair,  
Told all who fell, and when and where.  
Then tighter drew the coils around,  
And closer grew the battle-ground,  
And fewer feather’d arrows fell,  
And fainter grew the battle yell,  
Until upon that hill was heard  
The short, sharp whistle of the bird:  
Until that blood-soaked battle hill  
Was still as death, so more than still.

“The calm, that cometh after all,  
Look’d sweetly down at shut of day,  
Where friend and foe commingled lay  
Like leaves of forest as they fall.  
Afar the somber mountains frown’d,  
Here tall pines wheel’d their shadows round,  
Like long, slim fingers of a hand  
That sadly pointed out the dead.  
Like some broad shield high overhead  
The great white moon led on and on,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

As leading to the better land.  
All night I heard black cricket's trill,  
A night-bird calling from the hill—  
The place was so profoundly still.

“The mighty chief at last was down,  
A broken gate of brass and pride!  
His hair all dust, and this his crown!  
His firm lips were compress'd in hate  
To foes, yet all content with fate;  
While, circled round him thick, the foe  
Had folded hands in dust, and died.  
His tomahawk lay at his side,  
All blood, beside his broken bow.  
One arm stretch'd out, still over-bold,  
One hand half doubled hid in dust,  
And clutch'd the earth, as if to hold  
His hunting grounds still in his trust.

“Here tall grass bow'd its tassel'd head  
In dewy tears above the dead,  
And there they lay in crook'd fern,  
That waved and wept above by turn:  
And further on, by somber trees,  
They lay, wild heroes of wild deeds,  
In shrouds alone of weeping weeds,  
Bound in a never-to-be-broken peace.

“No trust that day had been betrayed;  
Not one had falter'd, not one brave  
Survived the fearful struggle, save  
One—save I the renegade,  
The red man's friend, and—they held me so  
For this alone—the white man's foe.

“They bore me bound for many a day  
Through fen and wild, by foamy flood,  
From my dear mountains far away,  
Where an adobé prison stood  
Beside a sultry, sullen, town,  
With iron eyes and stony frown;  
And in a dark and narrow cell,  
So hot it almost took my breath,  
And seem’d but some outpost of hell,  
They thrust me—as if I had been  
A monster, in a monster’s den.  
I cried aloud, I courted death,  
I call’d unto a strip of sky,  
The only thing beyond my cell  
That I could see, but no reply  
Came but the echo of my breath.  
I paced—how long I cannot tell—  
My reason fail’d, I knew no more,  
And swooning, fell upon the floor.  
Then months went on, till deep one night,  
When long thin bars of cool moonlight  
Lay shimmering along the floor,  
My senses came to me once more.

“My eyes look’d full into her eyes—  
Into her soul so true and tried,  
I thought myself in paradise,  
And wonder’d when she too had died.  
And then I saw the stripéd light  
That struggled past the prison bar,  
And in an instant, at the sight,  
My sinking soul fell just as far  
As could a star loosed by a jar  
From out the setting in a ring,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

The purpled semi-circled ring  
That seems to circle us at night.

“She saw my senses had return’d,  
Then swift to press my pallid face—  
Then, as if spurn’d, she sudden turn’d  
Her sweet face to the prison wall;  
Her bosom rose, her hot tears fell  
Fast as drip moss-stones in a well,  
And then, as if subduing all  
In one strong struggle of the soul  
Be what they were of vows or fears,  
With kisses and hot tender tears,  
There in the deadly, loathsome place,  
She bathed my pale and piteous face.

“I was so weak I could not speak  
Or press my pale lips to her cheek;  
I only looked my wish to share  
The secret of her presence there.  
Then looking through her falling hair,  
She press’d her finger to her lips,  
More sweet than sweets the brown bee sips.  
More sad than any grief untold,  
More silent than the milk-white moon,  
She turned away. I heard unfold  
An iron door, and she was gone.

“At last, one midnight, I was free;  
Again I felt the liquid air  
Around my hot brow like a sea,  
Sweet as my dear Madonna’s prayer,  
Or benedictions on the soul;  
Pure air, which God gives free to all,  
Again I breathed without control—

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

Pure air that man would fain entrall;  
God's air, which man hath seized and sold  
Unto his fellow-man for gold.

"I bow'd down to the bended sky,  
I toss'd my two thin hands on high,  
I call'd unto the crooked moon,  
I shouted to the shining stars,  
With breath and rapture uncontroll'd,  
Like some wild school-boy loosed at noon,  
Or comrade coming from the wars,  
Hailing his companions of old.

"Short time for shouting or delay,—  
The cock is shrill, the east is gray,  
Pursuit is made, we must away.  
They cast me on a sinewy steed,  
And bid me look to girth and guide—  
A caution of but little need.  
I dash the iron in his side,  
Swift as the shooting stars I ride;  
I turn, I see, to my dismay,  
A silent rider red as they;  
I glance again—it is my bride,  
My love, my life, rides at my side.

"By gulch and gorge and brake and all,  
Swift as the shining meteors fall,  
We fly, and never sound nor word  
But ringing mustang hoof is heard,  
And limbs of steel and lungs of steam  
Could not be stronger than theirs seem.  
Grandly as in some joyous dream,  
League on league, and hour on hour,  
Far, far from keep pursuit, or power

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

Of sheriff or bailiff, high or low,  
Into the bristling hills we go.

“Into the tumbled, clear McCloud,  
White as the foldings of a shroud ;  
We dash into the dashing stream,  
We breast the tide, we drop the rein,  
We clutch the streaming, tangled mane—  
And yet the rider at my side  
Has never look nor word replied.

“Out in its foam, its rush, its roar,  
Breasting away to the farther shore ;  
Steadily, bravely, gain’d at last,  
Gain’d where never a dastard foe  
Has dared to come, or friend to go.  
Pursuit is baffled and danger pass’d.

“Under an oak whose wide arms were  
Lifting aloft, as if in prayer,  
Under an oak, where the shining moon  
Like feather’d snow in a winter noon  
Quiver’d, sifted, and drifted down  
In spars and bars on her shoulders brown :  
And yet she was as silent still  
As block stones toppled from the hill—  
Great basalt blocks that near us lay,  
Deep nestled in the grass untrod  
By aught save wild beasts of the wood—  
Great, massive, squared, and chisel’d stone,  
Like columns that had toppled down  
From temple dome or tower crown,  
Along some drifted, silent way  
Of desolate and desert town  
Built by the children of the sun.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

And I in silence sat on one,  
And she stood gazing far away  
To where her childhood forests lay,  
Still as the stone I sat upon.

“I sought to catch her to my breast  
And charm her from her silent mood;  
She shrank as if a beam, a breath,  
Then silently before me stood,  
Still, coldly, as the kiss of death,  
Her face was darker than a pall,  
Her presence was so proudly tall,  
I would have started from the stone  
Where I sat gazing up at her,  
As from a form to earth unknown,  
Had I possess'd the power to stir.

“‘O touch me not, no more, no more;  
'Tis past, and my sweet dream is o'er.  
Impure! Impure! Impure!' she cried,  
In words as sweetly, weirdly wild  
As mingling of a rippled tide,  
And music on the waters spill'd. . . .  
‘But you are free. Fly! Fly alone.  
Yes, you will win another bride  
In some far clime where nought is known  
Of all that you have won or lost,  
Or what your liberty has cost;  
Will win you name, and place, and power,  
And ne'er recall this face, this hour,  
Save in some secret, deep regret,  
Which I forgive and you'll forget.  
Your destiny will lead you on  
Where, open'd wide to welcome you,  
Rich, ardent hearts and bosoms are,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

And snowy arms, more purely fair,  
And breasts—who dare say breasts more true?

“ ‘They said you had deserted me,  
Had rued you of your wood and wild.  
I knew, I knew it could not be,  
I trusted as a trusting child.  
I cross’d yon mountains bleak and high  
That curve their rough backs to the sky,  
I rode the white-maned mountain flood,  
And track’d for weeks the trackless wood.  
The good God led me, as before,  
And brought me to your prison-door.

“ ‘That madden’d call! that fever’d moan!  
I heard you in the midnight call  
My own name through the massive wall,  
In my sweet mountain-tongue and tone—  
And yet you call’d so feebly wild,  
I near mistook you for a child.

The keeper with his clinking keys  
I sought, implored upon my knees  
That I might see you, feel your breath,  
Your brow, or breathe you low replies  
Of comfort in your lonely death.  
His red face shone, his redder eyes  
Were like a fiend’s that feeds on lies.  
Again I heard your feeble moan,  
I cried—unto a heart of stone.  
Ah! why the hateful horrors tell?  
Enough! I crept into your cell.

“ ‘I nursed you, lured you back to life,  
And when you knew, and called me wife

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

And love, with pale lips rife  
With love and feeble loveliness,  
I turn'd away, I hid my face,  
In mad reproach and such distress,  
In dust down in that loathsome place.

“ ‘And then I vow’d a solemn vow  
That you should live, live and be free.  
And you have lived—are free; and now  
Too slow yon red sun comes to see  
My life or death, or me again.  
Oh, death! the peril and the pain  
I have endured! the dark, dark stain  
That I did take on my fair soul,  
All, all to save you, make you free,  
Are more than mortal can endure;  
But flame can make the foulest pure.

“ ‘Behold this finished funeral pyre,  
All ready for the form and fire,  
Which these, my own hands, did prepare  
For this last night; then lay me there.  
I would not hide me from my God  
Beneath the cold and sullen sod,  
But, wrapp’d in fiery shining shroud,  
Ascend to Him, a wreathing cloud.’

“She paused, she turn’d, she lean’d apace  
Her glance and half-regretting face,  
As if to yield herself to me;  
And then she cried, ‘It cannot be,  
For I have vow’d a solemn vow,  
And, God help me to keep it now!’

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

“I stood with arms extended wide  
To catch her to my burning breast;  
She caught a dagger from her side  
And, ere I knew to stir or start,  
She plunged it in her bursting heart,  
And fell into my arms and died—  
Died as my soul to hers was press’d,  
Died as I held her to my breast,  
Died without one word or moan,  
And left me with my dead—alone.

“I laid her warm upon the pile,  
And underneath the lisping oak  
I watch’d the columns of dark smoke  
Embrace her sweet lips, with a smile  
Of frenzied fierceness, while there came  
A gleaming column of red flame,  
That grew a grander monument  
Above her nameless noble mould  
Than ever bronze or marble lent  
To king or conqueror of old.

“It seized her in its hot embrace,  
And leapt as if to reach the stars.  
Then looking up I saw a face  
So saintly and so sweetly fair,  
So sad, so pitying, and so pure,  
I nigh forgot the prison bars,  
And for one instant, one alone,  
I felt I could forgive, endure.

“I laid a circlet of white stone,  
And left her ashes there alone. . . .  
Years after, years of storm and pain,  
I sought that sacred ground again.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

I saw the circle of white stone  
With tall, wild grasses overgrown.  
I did expect, I know not why,  
From out her sacred dust to find  
Wild pinks and daisies blooming fair;  
And when I did not find them there  
I almost deem'd her God unkind,  
Less careful of her dust than I.

“But why the dreary tale prolong?  
And deem you I confess'd me wrong,  
That I did bend a patient knee  
To all the deep wrongs done to me?  
That I, because the prison mould  
Was on my brow, and all its chill  
Was in my heart as chill as night,  
Till soul and body both were cold,  
Did curb my free-born mountain will  
And sacrifice my sense of right?

“No! no! and had they come that day  
While I with hands and garments red  
Stood by her pleading, patient clay,  
The one lone watcher by my dead,  
With cross-hilt dagger in my hand,  
And offer'd me my life and all  
Of titles, power, or of place,  
I should have spat them in the face,  
And spurn'd them every one.  
I live as God gave me to live,  
I see as God gave me to see.  
’Tis not my nature to forgive,  
Or cringe and plead and bend the knee  
To God or man in woe or weal,  
In penitence I cannot feel.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

“I do not question school nor creed  
Of Christian, Protestant, or Priest;  
I only know that creeds to me  
Are but new names for mystery,  
That good is good from east to east,  
And more I do not know nor need  
To know, to love my neighbor well.  
I take their dogmas, as they tell,  
Their pictures of their Godly good,  
In garments thick with heathen blood;  
Their heaven with his harp of gold,  
Their horrid pictures of their hell—  
Take hell and heaven undenied,  
Yet were the two placed side by side,  
Placed full before me for my choice,  
As they are pictured, best and worst,  
As they are peopled, tame and bold,  
The canonized, and the accursed  
Who dared to think, and thinking speak,  
And speaking act, bold cheek to cheek,  
I would in transports choose the first,  
And enter hell with lifted voice.

\* \* \* \*

“Go read the annals of the North  
And records there of many a wail,  
Of marshaling and going forth  
For missing sheriffs, and for men  
Who fell and none knew how nor when,—  
Who disappear’d on mountain trail,  
Or in some dense and narrow vale.  
Go, traverse Trinity and Scott,  
That curve their dark backs to the sun:  
Go, prowl them all. Lo! have they not  
The chronicles of my wild life?

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

My secrets on their lips of stone,  
My archives built of human bone?  
Go, range their wilds as I have done,  
From snowy crest to sleeping vales,  
And you will find on every one  
Enough to swell a thousand tales.

\* \* \* \*

“The soul cannot survive alone,  
And hate will die, like other things;  
I felt an ebbing in my rage;  
I hunger’d for the sound of one,  
Just one familiar word,—  
Yearn’d but to hear my fellow speak,  
Or sound of woman’s mellow tone,  
As beats the wild, imprisoned bird,  
That long nor kind nor mate has heard,  
With bleeding wings and panting beak  
Against its iron cage.

“I saw a low-roof’d rancho lie,  
Far, far below, at set of sun,  
Along the foot-hills crisp and dun—  
A lone sweet star in lower sky;  
Saw children passing to and fro,  
The busy housewife come and go,  
And white cows come at her command,  
And none look’d larger than my hand.  
Then worn and torn, and tann’d and brown,  
And heedless all, I hasten’d down;  
A wanderer, wandering lorn and late,  
I stood before the rustic gate.

“Two little girls, with brown feet bare,  
And tangled, tossing, yellow hair,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

Play'd on the green, fantastic dress'd,  
Around a great Newfoundland brute  
That lay half-resting on his breast,  
And with his red mouth open'd wide  
Would make believe that he would bite,  
As they assail'd him left and right,  
And then sprang to the other side,  
And fill'd with shouts the willing air.  
Oh, sweeter far than lyre or lute  
To my then hot and thirsty heart,  
And better self so wholly mute,  
Were those sweet voices calling there.

“Though some sweet scenes my eyes have seen,  
Some melody my soul has heard,  
No song of any maid, or bird,  
Or splendid wealth of tropic scene,  
Or scene or song of anywhere,  
Has my impulsive soul so stirr'd,  
As those young angels sporting there.

“The dog at sight of me arose,  
And nobly stood with lifted nose,  
Afront the children, now so still,  
And staring at me with a will.  
‘Come in, come in,’ the rancher cried,  
As here and there the housewife hied;  
‘Sit down, sit down, you travel late.  
What news of politics or war?  
And are you tired? Go you far?  
And where you from? Be quick, my Kate,  
‘This boy is sure in need of food.’  
The little children close by stood,  
And watch'd and gazed inquiringly,  
Then came and climbed upon my knee.

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

“ ‘That there’s my Ma,’ the eldest said,  
And laugh’d and toss’d her pretty head;  
And then, half baiting of her joy,  
‘Have you a Ma, you stranger boy?  
And there hangs Carlo on the wall  
As large as life; that mother drew  
With berry stains upon a shred  
Of tattered tent; but hardly you  
Would know the picture his at all,  
For Carlo’s black, and this is red.’  
Again she laugh’d, and shook her head,  
And shower’d curls all out of place;  
Then sudden sad, she raised her face  
To mine, and tenderly she said,  
‘Have you, like us, a pretty home?  
Have you, like me, a dog and toy?  
Where do you live, and whither roam?  
And where’s your Pa, poor stranger boy?’

“It seem’d so sweetly out of place  
Again to meet my fellow-man.  
I gazed and gazed upon his face  
As something I had never seen.  
The melody of woman’s voice  
Fell on my ear as falls the rain  
Upon the weary, waiting plain.  
I heard, and drank and drank again,  
As earth with crack’d lips drinks the rain,  
In green to revel and rejoice.  
I ate with thanks my frugal food,  
The first return’d for many a day.  
I had met kindness by the way!  
I had at last encounter’d good!

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

“I sought my couch, but not to sleep;  
New thoughts were coursing strong and deep  
My wild, impulsive passion-heart;  
I could not rest, my heart was moved,  
My iron will forgot its part,  
And I wept like a child reproved.

“I lay and pictured me a life  
Afar from peril, hate, or pain;  
Enough of battle, blood, and strife,  
I would take up life’s load again;  
And ere the breaking of the morn  
I swung my rifle from the horn,  
And turned to other scenes and lands  
With lighten’d heart and whiten’d hands.

“Where orange blossoms never die,  
Where red fruits ripen all the year  
Beneath a sweet and balmy sky,  
Far from my language or my land,  
Reproach, regret, or shame or fear,  
I came in hope, I wander’d here—  
Yes, here; and this red, bony hand  
That holds this glass of ruddy cheer—”

“ ‘Tis he!” hiss’d the crafty advocate.  
He sprang to his feet, and hot with hate  
He reach’d his hands, and he call’d aloud,  
“ ‘Tis the renegade of the red McCloud!”

Slowly the Alcalde rose from his chair;  
“Hand me, touch me, him who dare!”  
And his heavy glass on the board of oak  
He smote with such savage and mighty stroke,  
It ground to dust in his bony hand,

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

---

And heavy bottles did clink and tip  
As if an earthquake were in the land.  
He tower'd up, and in his ire  
Seem'd taller than a church's spire.  
He gazed a moment—and then, the while  
An icy cold and defiant smile  
Did curve his thin and livid lip,  
He turn'd on his heel, he strode through the hall  
Grand as a god, so grandly tall,  
Yet white and cold as a chisel'd stone;  
He passed him out the adobé door  
Into the night, and he passed alone,  
And never was known or heard of more.

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Byron's Corsair had but four hundred lines when first out, but he finally built it up to about fifteen hundred.

The lesson of this poem is that of persistent toil and endeavor. It certainly is not "a little thing dashed off before breakfast," for it was twice revised and published before its first appearance in London, and has been cut and revised at least half a dozen times since; and is still incomplete and very unsatisfying to the writer, except as to the descriptions. It was my first attempt at telling a story in verse, that was thought worth preserving. It was begun when but a lad, camped with our horses for a month's rest in an old adobe ruin on the Reading Ranch, with the gleaming snows of Mount Shasta standing out above the clouds against the cold, blue north. The story is not new, having been written, or at least lived in every mountain land of intermixed races that has been: a young outlaw in love with a wild mountain beauty, his battles for her people against his own, the capture, prison, brave release, flight, return, and revenge—a sort of modified Mazeppa. But it has been a fat source of feeding for grimly humorous and sensational writers, who long ago claimed to have found in it the story of my early life; and strangely enough I was glad when they did so, and read their stories with wild delight. I don't know why I always encouraged this idea of having been an outlaw, but I recall that when Trelawny told me that Byron was more ambitious to be thought the hero of his wildest poems than even to be king of Greece I could not help

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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saying to myself, as Napoleon said to the thunders preceding Waterloo, "We are of accord."

The only serious trouble about the claim that I made the fight of life up the ugly steeps from a hole in an adobe prison-wall to the foothills of Olympus instead of over the pleasant campus of a college, is the fact that "our friends the enemy" fixed the date at about the same time in which I am on record as reading my class poem in another land. Besides, I was chosen to the bench on the very ticket when the very sheriff who should have kept me in his adobe prison was elected senator, and by some of the very men of my Mount Shasta with whom I had served in war against these same Indians for whom it is said I sold my birthright. Or did I have a double, and was it the other self who was at college? And is it not possible that I am even now the original and only real Joaquin Murietta? For more than once in the old days I was told (and how pleased I was to hear it said) that no other than Joaquin Murietta could ever ride as I rode. But here again is confusion, even more than the confusion of dates and deeds and names. For his hair was as black as a whole midnight, while mine was the hue of hammered gold. And, after all, was it not my vanity and willingness to be thought Joaquin, rather than pity for the brave boy outlaw, driven to desperation by wrongs too brutal to be told, that made me write of him and usurp his bloody name? Anyhow, I'd rather to-day be Joaquin Murietta, dead or living, than the wretch who got the reward for his alleged taking off. And was Joaquin Murietta really killed when that party of Texans surprised and butchered a band of unarmed Mexicans? Nine men in ten will say not.

Mrs. Gale Page, daughter of an early governor of Oregon, told me at Walla Walla, July 5th, 1896, in her own house, that her father, who knew and liked Joaquin, when a miner, had had two letters from him, dated and postmarked Mexico, years after his alleged death. So he certainly was not killed as told. But pity, pity, that men should so foolishly waste time with either me or mine when I have led them into the mighty heart of majestic Shasta. Why yonder, lone as God and white as the great white throne, there looms against the sapphire upper seas a mountain peak that props the very porch of heaven; and yet they bother with and want to torment a poor mote of dust that sinks in the grasses at their feet! Why, I know a single cañon there so deep, so bottomless, and broad and somber that a whole night once housed there and let a gold and silver day glide on and on and

## THE TALE OF THE TALL ALCALDE

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over it all the vast day long, and all day long night lay there undiscovered. Yet in this presence there be those who will stoop to look at me, a mere mote at their feet, or on their shoes, and bother to know whether it be a black speck or a white; preferring, however, to find it black.



## THE ARIZONIAN

*Come to my sunland! Come with me  
To the land I love; where the sun and sea  
Are wed for ever; where the palm and pine  
Are fill'd with singers; where tree and vine  
Are voiced with prophets! O come, and you  
Shall sing a song with the seas that swirl  
And kiss their hands to that cold white girl,  
To the maiden moon in her mantle of blue.*

“And I have said, and I say it ever,  
As the years go on and the world goes over,  
’Twere better to be content and clever,  
In the tending of cattle and the tossing of clover,  
In the grazing of cattle and growing of grain,  
Than a strong man striving for fame or gain;  
Be even as kine in the red-tipped clover:  
For they lie down and their rests are rests,  
And the days are theirs, come sun, come rain,  
To rest, rise up, and repose again;  
While we wish, yearn, and do pray in vain,  
And hope to ride on the billows of bosoms,  
And hope to rest in the haven of breasts,  
Till the heart is sicken’d and the fair hope dead—  
Be even as clover with its crown of blossoms,  
Even as blossoms ere the bloom is shed,  
Kiss’d by the kine and the brown sweet bee—  
For these have the sun, and moon, and air,  
And never a bit of the burthen of care:  
Yet with all of our caring what more have we?

"I would court content like a lover lonely,  
I would woo her, win her, and wear her only.  
I would never go over the white sea wall  
For gold or glory or for aught at all."

He said these things as he stood with the Squire  
By the river's rim in the field of clover,  
While the stream flow'd on and the clouds flew over,  
With the sun tangled in and the fringes afire.

So the Squire lean'd with a kindly glory  
To humor his guest, and to hear his story;  
For his guest had gold, and he yet was clever,  
And mild of manner; and, what was more, he,  
In the morning's ramble had praised the kine,  
The clover's reach and the meadows fine,  
And so made the Squire his friend forever.

His brow was brown'd by the sun and weather,  
And touch'd by the terrible hand of time;  
His rich black beard had a fringe of rime,  
As silk and silver inwove together.  
There were hoops of gold all over his hands,  
And across his breast in chains and bonds,  
Broad and massive as belts of leather.

And the belts of gold were bright in the sun,  
But brighter than gold his black eyes shone  
From their sad face-setting so swarth and dun—  
Brighter than beautiful Santan stone,  
Brighter even than balls of fire,  
As he said, hot-faced, in the face of the Squire:—

“The pines bow’d over, the stream bent under,  
The cabin was cover’d with thatches of palm  
Down in a cañon so deep, the wonder  
Was what it could know in its clime but calm;  
Down in a cañon so cleft asunder  
By sabre-stroke in the young world’s prime,  
It look’d as if broken by bolts of thunder,  
And burst asunder and rent and riven  
By earthquakes driven that turbulent time  
The red cross lifted red hands to heaven.

“And this in that land where the sun goes  
down,  
And gold is gather’d by tide and by stream,  
And the maidens are brown as the cocoa brown,  
And life is a love and a love is a dream;  
Where the winds come in from the far Cathay  
With odor of spices and balm and bay,  
And summer abideth with man alway,  
Nor comes in a tour with the stately June,  
And comes too late and returns too soon.

“She stood in the shadows as the sun went  
down,  
Fretting her hair with her fingers brown,  
As tall as the silk-tipp’d tassel’d corn—  
Stood watching, dark brow’d, as I weighed the  
gold  
We had wash’d that day where the river roll’d;  
And her proud lip curl’d with a sun-clime scorn,  
As she ask’d, ‘Is she better, or fairer than I?’—  
She, that blonde in the land beyond,  
Where the sun is hid and the seas are high—  
That you gather in gold as the years go by,

And hoard and hide it away for her  
As the squirrel burrows the black pine-burr?

“Now the gold weigh’d well, but was lighter  
of weight

Than we two had taken for days of late,  
So I was fretted, and brow a-frown,  
I said, half-angered, with head held down—  
‘Well, yes, she is fairer; and I loved her first:  
And shall love her last, come worst to the worst.’

“Her lips grew livid, and her eyes afire  
As I said this thing; and higher and higher  
The hot words ran, when the booming thunder  
Peal’d in the crags and the pine-tops under,  
While up by the cliff in the murky skies  
It look’d as the clouds had caught the fire—  
The flash and fire of her wonderful eyes!

“She turn’d from the door and down to the  
river,  
And mirror’d her face in the whimsical tide,  
Then threw back her hair as one throwing a  
quiver,  
As an Indian throws it back far from his side  
And free from his hands, swinging fast to the  
shoulder  
When rushing to battle; and, turning, she  
sigh’d  
And shook, and shiver’d as aspens shiver.  
Then a great green snake slid into the river,  
Glistening green, and with eyes of fire;  
Quick, double-handed she seized a boulder,  
And cast it with all the fury of passion,  
As with lifted head it went curving across,  
Swift darting its tongue like a fierce desire,

Curving and curving, lifting higher and higher,  
Bent and beautiful as a river moss;  
Then, smitten, it turn'd, bent, broken and  
doubled

And lick'd, red-tongued, like a forked fire,  
Then sank and the troubled waters bubbled  
And so swept on in the old swift fashion.

“I lay in my hammock: the air was heavy  
And hot and threat’ning; the very heaven  
Was holding its breath; and bees in a bevy  
Hid under my thatch; and birds were driven  
In clouds to the rocks in a hurried whirr  
As I peer’d down by the path for her.

“She stood like a bronze bent over the river,  
The proud eyes fix’d, the passion unspoken.  
Then the heavens broke like a great dyke broken;  
And ere I fairly had time to give her  
A shout of warning, a rushing of wind  
And the rolling of clouds and a deafening din  
And a darkness that had been black to the blind  
Came down, as I shouted ‘Come in! Come in!  
Come under the roof, come up from the river,  
As up from a grave—come now, or come never!’  
The tassel’d tops of the pines were as weeds,  
The red-woods rock’d like to lake-side reeds,  
And the world seemed darken’d and drown’d  
forever,  
While I crouched low; as a beast that bleeds.

“One time in the night as the black wind  
shifted,  
And a flash of lightning stretch’d over the stream,  
I seemed to see her with her brown hands lifted—

Only seem'd to see as one sees in a dream—  
With her eyes wide wild and her pale lips press'd,  
And the blood from her brow, and the flood to  
her breast;  
When the flood caught her hair as flax in a  
wheel,  
And wheeling and whirling her round like a reel;  
Laugh'd loud her despair, then leapt like a steed,  
Holding tight to her hair, folding fast to her  
heel,  
Laughing fierce, leaping far as if spurr'd to its  
speed!

“Now mind, I tell you all this did but seem—  
Was seen as you see fearful scenes in a dream;  
For what the devil could the lighting show  
In a night like that, I should like to know?

“And then I slept, and sleeping I dream'd  
Of great green serpents with tongues of fire,  
And of death by drowning, and of after death—  
Of the day of judgment, wherein it seem'd  
That she, the heathen, was bidden higher,  
Higher than I; that I clung to her side,  
And clinging struggled, and struggling cried,  
And crying, wakened all weak of my breath.

“Long leaves of the sun lay over the floor,  
And a chipmunk chirp'd in the open door,  
While above on his crag the eagle scream'd,  
Scream'd as he never had scream'd before.  
I rush'd to the river: the flood had gone  
Like a thief, with only his tracks upon  
The weeds and grasses and warm wet sand,  
And I ran after with reaching hand,

And call'd as I reach'd, and reach'd as I ran,  
And ran till I came to the cañon's van,  
Where the waters lay in a bent lagoon,  
Hook'd and crook'd like the horned moon.

“And there in the surge where the waters met,  
And the warm wave lifted, and the winds did fret  
The wave till it foam'd with rage on the land,  
She lay with the wave on the warm white sand;  
Her rich hair trailed with the trailing weeds,  
While her small brown hands lay prone or lifted  
As the waves sang strophes in the broken reeds,  
Or paused in pity, and in silence sifted  
Sands of gold, as upon her grave.

“And as sure as you see yon browsing kine,  
And breathe the breath of your meadows fine,  
When I went to my waist in the warm white  
wave

And stood all pale in the wave to my breast,  
And reach'd my hands in her rest and unrest,  
Her hands were lifted and reach'd to mine.

“Now mind, I tell you, I cried, ‘Come in!  
Come into the house, come out from the hollow,  
Come out of the storm, come up from the river!’  
Aye, cried, and call'd in that desolate din,  
Though I did not rush out, and in plain words  
give her

A wordy warning of the flood to follow,  
Word by word, and letter by letter;  
But she knew it as well as I, and better;  
For once in the desert of New Mexico

When we two sought frantically far and wide  
For the famous spot where Apaches shot  
With bullets of gold their buffalo,  
And she stood faithful to death at my side,  
I threw me down in the hard hot sand  
Utterly famish'd, and ready to die;  
Then a speck arose in the red-hot sky—  
A speck no larger than a lady's hand—  
While she at my side bent tenderly over,  
Shielding my face from the sun as a cover,  
And wetting my face, as she watch'd by my side,  
From a skin she had borne till the high noontide,  
(I had emptied mine in the heat of the morning)  
When the thunder mutter'd far over the plain  
Like a monster bound or a beast in pain:  
She sprang the instant, and gave the warning,  
With her brown hand pointed to the burning  
skies,  
For I was too weak unto death to rise.  
But she knew the peril, and her iron will,  
With a heart as true as the great North Star,  
Did bear me up to the palm-tipp'd hill,  
Where the fiercest beasts in a brotherhood,  
Beasts that had fled from the plain and far,  
In perfectest peace expectant stood,  
With their heads held high, and their limbs  
a-quiver.  
Then ere she barely had time to breathe  
The boiling waters began to seethe  
From hill to hill in a booming river,  
Beating and breaking from hill to hill—  
Even while yet the sun shot fire,  
Without the shield of a cloud above—  
Filling the cañon as you would fill

A wine-cup, drinking in swift desire,  
With the brim new-kiss'd by the lips you love!

“So you see she knew—knew perfectly well,  
As well as I could shout and tell,  
That the mountain would send a flood to the  
plain,  
Sweeping the gorge like a hurricane,  
When the fire flash'd and the thunder fell.

“Therefore it is wrong, and I say therefore  
Unfair, that a mystical, brown-wing'd moth  
Or midnight bat should forevermore  
Fan past my face with its wings of air,  
And follow me up, down, everywhere,  
Flit past, pursue me, or fly before,  
Dimly limning in each fair place  
The full fixed eyes and the sad, brown face,  
So forty times worse than if it were wroth!

“I gather'd the gold I had hid in the earth,  
Hid over the door and hid under the hearth:  
Hoarded and hid, as the world went over,  
For the love of a blonde by a sun-brown'd lover,  
And I said to myself, as I set my face  
To the East and afar from the desolate place,  
'She has braided her tresses, and through her  
tears  
Look'd away to the West for years, the years  
That I have wrought where the sun tans brown;  
She has waked by night, she has watch'd by day,  
She has wept and wonder'd at my delay,  
Alone and in tears, with her head held down,  
Where the ships sail out and the seas swirl in,  
Forgetting to knit and refusing to spin.

"She shall lift her head, she shall see her lover,  
She shall hear his voice like a sea that rushes,  
She shall hold his gold in her hands of snow,  
And down on his breast she shall hide her  
blushes,  
And never a care shall her true heart know,  
While the clods are below, or the clouds are  
above her.

"On the fringe of the night she stood with her  
pitcher  
At the old town fountain: and oh! passing fair.  
'I am riper now,' I said, 'but am richer,'  
And I lifted my hand to my beard and hair;  
'I am burnt by the sun, I am brown'd by the sea;  
I am white of my beard, and am bald, may be;  
Yet for all such things what can her heart care?'  
Then she moved; and I said, 'How marvelous  
fair!'  
She look'd to the West, with her arm arch'd  
over;  
'Looking for me, her sun-brown'd lover,'  
I said to myself, and my heart grew bold,  
And I stepp'd me nearer to her presence there,  
As approaching a friend; for 'twas here of old  
Our troths were plighted and the tale was told.

"How young she was and how fair she was!  
How tall as a palm, and how pearly fair,  
As the night came down on her glorious hair!  
Then the night grew deep and my eyes grew dim,  
And a sad-faced figure began to swim  
And float by my face, flit past, then pause,  
With her hands held up and her head held down,  
Yet face to my face; and that face was brown!

"Now why did she come and confront me  
 there,  
 With the flood to her face and the moist in her  
 hair,  
 And a mystical stare in her marvelous eyes?  
 I had call'd to her twice, 'Come in! come in!  
 Come out of the storm to the calm within!'  
 Now, that is the reason I do make complain  
 That for ever and ever her face should rise,  
 Facing face to face with her great sad eyes.

"I said then to myself, and I say it again,  
 Gainsay it you, gainsay it who will,  
 I shall say it over and over still,  
 And will say it ever; for I know it true,  
 That I did all that a man could do  
 (Some men's good doings are done in vain)  
 To save that passionate child of the sun,  
 With her love as deep as the doubled main,  
 And as strong and fierce as a troubled sea—  
 That beautiful bronze with its soul of fire,  
 Its tropical love and its kingly ire—  
 That child as fix'd as a pyramid,  
 As tall as a tule and pure as a nun—  
 And all there is of it, the all I did,  
 As often happens was done in vain.  
 So there is no bit of her blood on me.

'She is marvelous young and is wonderful fair,'  
 I said again, and my heart grew bold,  
 And beat and beat a charge for my feet.  
 'Time that defaces us, places, and replaces us,  
 And trenches our faces in furrows for tears,  
 Has traced here nothing in all these years.  
 'Tis the hair of gold that I vex'd of old,

The marvelous flowing, gold-flower of hair,  
And the peaceful eyes in their sweet surprise  
That I have kiss'd till the head swam round.  
And the delicate curve of the dimpled chin,  
And the pouting lips and the pearls within  
Are the same, the same, but so young, so fair !'  
My heart leapt out and back at a bound,  
As a child that starts, then stops, then lingers.  
'How wonderful young !' I lifted my fingers  
And fell to counting the round years down  
That I had dwelt where the sun tans brown.

"Four full hands, and a finger over !  
'She does not know me, her truant lover,'  
I said to myself, for her brow was a-frown  
As I stepp'd still nearer, with my head held down,  
All abash'd and in blushes my brown face over ;  
'She does not know me, her long lost lover,  
For my beard's so long and my skin's so brown  
That I well might pass myself for another.'  
So I lifted my voice and I spake aloud :  
'Annette, my darling ! Annette Macleod !'  
She started, she stopped, she turn'd, amazed,  
She stood all wonder, her eyes wild-wide,  
Then turn'd in terror down the dusk wayside,  
And cried as she fled, 'The man he is crazed,  
And he calls the maiden name of my mother !'

"Let the world turn over, and over, and over,  
And toss and tumble like beasts in pain,  
Crack, quake, and tremble, and turn full over  
And die, and never rise up again ;  
Let her dash her peaks through the purple cover,  
Let her splash her seas in the face of the sun—  
I have no one to love me now, not one,

In a world as full as a world can hold;  
So I will get gold as I erst have done,  
I will gather a coffin top-full of gold,  
To take to the door of Death, to buy—  
Buy what, when I double my hands and die?

“Go down, go down to your fields of clover,  
Go down with your kine to the pastures fine,  
And give no thought, or care, or labor  
For maid or man, good name or neighbor;  
For I gave all as the years went over—  
Gave all my youth, my years and labor,  
And a heart as warm as the world is cold,  
For a beautiful, bright, and delusive lie:  
Gave youth, gave years, gave love for gold;  
Giving and getting, yet what have I?

“The red ripe stars hang low overhead,  
Let the good and the light of soul reach up,  
Pluck gold as plucking a butter-cup:  
But I am as lead, and my hands are red.

“So the sun climbs up, and on, and over,  
And the days go out and the tides come in,  
And the pale moon rubs on her purple cover  
Till worn as thin and as bright as tin;  
But the ways are dark and the days are dreary,  
And the dreams of youth are but dust in age,  
And the heart grows harden’d and the hands  
grow weary,  
Holding them up for their heritage.

“For we promise so great and we gain so little;  
For we promise so great of glory and gold,  
And we gain so little that the hands grow cold,

And the strained heart-strings wear bare and brittle,  
And for gold and glory we but gain instead  
A fond heart sicken'd and a fair hope dead.

“So I have said, and I say it over,  
And can prove it over and over again,  
That the four-footed beasts in the red-crown'd clover,  
The piéd and hornéd beasts on the plain  
That lie down, rise up, and repose again,  
And do never take care or toil or spin,  
Nor buy, nor build, nor gather in gold,  
As the days go out and the tides come in,  
Are better than we by a thousand-fold;  
For what is it all, in the words of fire,  
But a vexing of soul and a vain desire?”

This book, in the following lines, was dedicated to Maud, my little daughter in Oregon.

Because the skies were blue, because  
The sun in fringes of the sea  
Was tangled, and delightfully  
Kept dancing on as in a waltz,  
And tropic trees bowed to the seas  
And bloomed and bore years through and through,  
And birds in blended gold and blue  
Were thick and sweet as swarming bees,  
And sang as if in Paradise  
And all that Paradise was spring—  
Did I too sing with lifted eyes,  
Because I could not choose but sing.

With garments full of sea winds blown  
From isles beyond of spice and balm  
Beside the sea, beneath her palm,  
She waits, as true as chiseled stone,  
My childhood's child, my June in May,  
So wiser than thy father is,  
These lines, these leaves, and all of this  
Are thine—a loose, uncouth bouquet—  
So, wait and watch for sail or sign,  
A ship shall mount the hollow seas  
Blown to thy place of blossomed trees,  
And birds, and song, and summer-shine.

I throw a kiss across the sea,  
I drink the winds as drinking wine,  
And dream they are all blown from thee—  
I catch the whispered kiss of thine.  
Shall I return with lifted face,  
Or head held down as in disgrace  
To hold thy two brown hands in mine?

England, 1871.

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

*The hills were brown, the heavens were blue,  
A woodpecker pounded a pine-top shell,  
While a partridge whistled the whole day through  
For a rabbit to dance in the chaparral,  
And a grey grouse drumm'd, "All's well, all's  
well."*

### I

Wrinkled and brown as a bag of leather,  
A squaw sits moaning long and low.  
Yesterday she was a wife and mother,  
Today she is rocking her to and fro,  
A childless widow, in weeds and woe.

An Indian sits in a rocky cavern  
Chipping a flint in an arrow head;  
His children are moving as still as shadows,  
His squaw is moulding some balls of lead,  
With round face painted a battle-red.

An Indian sits in a black-jack jungle,  
Where a grizzly bear has rear'd her young,  
Whetting a flint on a granite boulder.  
His quiver is over his brown back hung—  
His face is streak'd and his bow is strung.

An Indian hangs from a cliff of granite,  
Like an eagle's nest built in the air,  
Looking away to the east, and watching  
The smoke of the cabins curling there,  
And eagle's feathers are in his hair.

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

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In belt of wampum, in battle fashion  
An Indian watches with wild desire.  
He is red with paint, he is black with passion;  
And grand as a god in his savage ire,  
He leans and listens till stars are a-fire.

All somber and sullen and sad, a chieftain  
Now looks from the mountain far into the sea.  
Just before him beat in the white billows,  
Just behind him the toppled tall tree  
And woodmen chopping, knee buckled to knee.

## II

All together, all in council,  
In a cañon wall'd so high  
That no thing could ever reach them  
Save some stars dropp'd from the sky.  
And the brown bats sweeping by:

Tawny chieftains thin and wiry,  
Wise as brief, and brief as bold;  
Chieftains young and fierce and fiery,  
Chieftains stately, stern and old,  
Bronzed and battered—battered gold.

Flamed the council-fire brighter,  
Flash'd black eyes like diamond beads,  
When a woman told her sorrows,  
While a warrior told his deeds,  
And a widow tore her weeds.

Then was lit the pipe of council  
That their fathers smoked of old,

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

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With its stem of manzanita,  
And its bowl of quartz and gold,  
And traditions manifold.

How from lip to lip in silence  
Burn'd it round the circle red,  
Like an evil star slow passing  
(Sign of battles and bloodshed)  
Round the heavens overhead.

Then the silence deep was broken  
By the thunder rolling far,  
As gods muttering in anger,  
Or the bloody battle-car  
Of some Christian king at war.

“ ’Tis the spirits of my Fathers  
Mutt’ring vengeance in the skies ;  
And the flashing of the lightning  
Is the anger of their eyes,  
Bidding us in battle rise,”

Cried the war-chief, now uprising,  
Naked all above the waist,  
While a belt of shells and silver  
Held his tamoos to its place,  
And the war-paint streaked his face.

Women melted from the council,  
Boys crept backward out of sight,  
Till alone a wall of warriors  
In their paint and battle-plight  
Sat reflecting back the light.

“O my Fathers in the storm-cloud!”  
(Red arms tossing to the skies,  
While the massive walls of granite  
Seem’d to shrink to half their size,  
And to mutter strange replies)—

“Soon we come, O angry Fathers,  
Down the darkness you have cross’d:  
Speak for hunting-grounds there for us;  
Those you left us we have lost—  
Gone like blossoms in a frost.

“Warriors!” (and his arms fell folded  
On his tawny swelling breast,  
While his voice, now low and plaintive  
As the waves in their unrest,  
Touching tenderness confess’d).

“Where is Wrotto, wise of counsel,  
Yesterday here in his place?  
A brave lies dead down in the valley,  
Last brave of his line and race,  
And a Ghost sits on his face.

“Where his boy the tender-hearted,  
With his mother yestermorn?  
Lo! a wigwam door is darken’d,  
And a mother mourns forlorn,  
With her long locks toss’d and torn.

“Lo! our daughters have been gather’d  
From among us by the foe,  
Like the lilies they once gather’d  
In the spring-time all aglow  
From the banks of living snow.

“Through the land where we for ages  
Laid the bravest, dearest dead,  
Grinds the savage white man’s plowshare  
Grinding sires’ bones for bread—  
We shall give them blood instead.

“I saw white skulls in a furrow,  
And around the cursed plowshare  
Clung the flesh of my own children,  
And my mother’s tangled hair  
Tailed along the furrow there.

“Warriors! braves! I cry for vengeance!  
And the dim ghosts of the dead  
Unavenged do wail and shiver  
In the storm cloud overhead,  
And shoot arrows battle-red.”

Then he ceased and sat among them,  
With his long locks backward strown;  
They as mute as men of marble,  
He a king upon the throne,  
And as still as any stone.

Then uprose the war chief’s daughter,  
Taller than the tassell’d corn,  
Sweeter than the kiss of morning,  
Sad as some sweet star of morn,  
Half defiant, half forlorn.

Robed in skins of striped panther  
Lifting loosely to the air  
With a face a shade of sorrow  
And black eyes that said, Beware!  
Nestled in a storm or hair;

With her stripéd robes around her,  
Fasten'd by an eagle's beak,  
Stood she by the stately chieftain,  
Proud and pure as Shasta's peak,  
As she ventured thus to speak:

“Must the tomahawk of battle  
Be unburied where it lies,  
O, last war chief of Taschastas?  
Must the smoke of battle rise  
Like a storm cloud in the skies?

“True, some wretch has laid a brother  
With his swift feet to the sun,  
But because one bough is broken,  
Must the broad oak be undone?  
All the fir trees fell'd as one?

“True, the braves have faded, wasted  
Like ripe blossoms in the rain,  
But when we have spent the arrows,  
Do we twang the string in vain,  
And then snap the bow in twain?”

Like a vessel in the tempest  
Shook the warrior, wild and grim,  
As he gazed out in the midnight,  
As to things that beckon'd him,  
And his eyes were moist and dim.

Then he turn'd, and to his bosom  
Battle-scarr'd, and strong as brass,  
Tenderly the warrior press'd her  
As if she were made of glass,  
Murmuring, “Alas! alas!

“Loua Ellah! Spotted Lily!  
Streaks of blood shall be the sign,  
On their cursed and mystic pages,  
Representing me and mine!  
By Tonatiu’s fiery shrine!

“When the grass shall grow untrodden  
In my war path, and the plow  
Shall be grinding through this cañon  
Where my braves are gather’d now,  
Still shall they record this vow:

“War and vengeance! rise, my warrior,  
Rise and shout the battle sign,  
Ye who love revenge and glory!  
Ye for peace, in silence pine,  
And no more be braves of mine.”

Then the war yell roll’d and echoed  
As they started from the ground,  
Till an eagle from his cedar  
Starting, answer’d back the sound,  
And flew circling round and round.

“Enough, enough, my kingly father,”  
And the glory of her eyes  
Flash’d the valor and the passion  
That may sleep but never dies,  
As she proudly thus replies:

“Can the cedar be a willow,  
Pliant and as little worth?  
It shall stand the king of forests,

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

---

Or its fall shall shake the earth,  
Desolating heart and hearth!"

\* \* \* \* \*

### III

\* \* \* \* \*

From cold east shore to warm west sea  
The red men followed the red sun,  
And faint and failing fast as he,  
They knew too well their race was run.  
This ancient tribe, press'd to the wave,  
There fain had slept a patient slave,  
And died out as red embers die  
From flames that once leapt hot and high;  
But, roused to anger, half arose  
Around that chief, a sudden flood,  
A hot and hungry cry for blood;  
Half drowsy shook a feeble hand,  
Then sank back in a tame repose,  
And left him to his fate and foes,  
A stately wreck upon the strand.

\* \* \* \* \*

His eye was like the lightning's wing,  
His voice was like a rushing flood;  
And when a captive bound he stood  
His presence look'd the perfect king.

'Twas held at first that he should die:  
I never knew the reason why  
A milder council did prevail,  
Save that we shrank from blood, and save  
That brave men do respect the brave.  
Down sea sometimes there was a sail,  
And far at sea, they said, an isle,

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

---

And he was sentenced to exile;  
In open boat upon the sea  
To go the instant on the main,  
And never under penalty  
Of death to touch the shore again.  
A troop of bearded buckskinn'd men  
Bore him hard-hurried to the wave,  
Placed him swift in the boat; and then  
Swift pushing to the gristling sea,  
His daughter rush'd down suddenly,  
Threw him his bow, leapt from the shore  
Into the boat beside the brave,  
And sat her down and seized the oar,  
And never question'd, made replies,  
Or moved her lips, or raised her eyes.

His breast was like a gate of brass,  
His brow was like a gather'd storm;  
There is no chisell'd stone that has  
So stately and complete a form,  
In sinew, arm, and every part,  
In all the galleries of art.

Gray, bronzed, and naked to the waist,  
He stood half halting in the prow,  
With quiver bare and idle bow.  
The warm sea fondled with the shore,  
And laid his white face to the sands.  
His daughter sat with her sad face  
Bent on the wave, with her two hands  
Held tightly to the dripping oar;  
And as she sat, her dimpled knee  
Bent lithe as wand or willow tree,  
So round and full, so rich and free,

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

---

That no one would have ever known  
That it had either joint or bone.

Her eyes were black, her face was brown,  
Her breasts were bare and there fell down  
Such wealth of hair, it almost hid  
The two, in its rich jetty fold—  
Which I had sometime fain forbid,  
They were so richer, fuller far  
Than any polish'd bronzes are,  
And richer hued than any gold.  
On her brown arms and her brown hands  
Were bars of gold and golden bands,  
Rough hammer'd from the virgin ore,  
So heavy, they could hold no more.

I wonder now, I wonder'd then,  
That men who fear'd not gods nor men  
Laid no rude hands at all on her,—  
I think she had a dagger slid  
Down in her silver'd wampum belt;  
It might have been, instead of hilt,  
A flashing diamond hurry-hid  
That I beheld—I could not know  
For certain, we did hasten so;  
And I know now less sure than then:  
Deeds strangle memories of deeds,  
Red blossoms wither, choked with weeds,  
And years drown memories of men.  
Some things have happened since—and then  
This happen'd years and years ago.

“Go, go!” the captain cried, and smote  
With sword and boot the swaying boat,  
Until it quiver'd as at sea

And brought the old chief to his knee.  
He turn'd his face, and turning rose  
With hand raised fiercely to his foes:  
"Yes, I will go, last of my race,  
Push'd by you robbers ruthlessly  
Into the hollows of the sea,  
From this my last, last resting place.  
Traditions of my fathers say  
A feeble few reach'd for this land,  
And we reach'd them a welcome hand  
Of old, upon another shore;  
Now they are strong, we weak as they,  
And they have driven us before  
Their faces, from that sea to this:  
Then marvel not if we have sped  
Sometime an arrow as we fled,  
So keener than a serpent's kiss."

He turn'd a time unto the sun  
That lay half hidden in the sea,  
As in his hollows rock'd asleep,  
All trembled and breathed heavily;  
Then arch'd his arm, as you have done,  
For sharp masts piercing through the deep.  
No shore or kind ship met his eye,  
Or isle, or sail, or anything,  
Save white sea gulls on dipping wing,  
And mobile sea and molten sky.

"Farewell!—push seaward, child!" he cried,  
And quick the paddle-strokes replied.  
Like lightning from the panther-skin,  
That bound his loins round about  
He snatch'd a poison'd arrow out,  
That like a snake lay hid within,

And twang'd his bow. The captain fell  
Prone on his face, and such a yell  
Of triumph from that savage rose  
As man may never hear again.  
He stood as standing on the main,  
The topmost main, in proud repose,  
And shook his clench'd fist at his foes,  
And call'd, and cursed them every one.  
He heeded not the shouts and shot  
That follow'd him, but grand and grim  
Stood up against the level sun;  
And, standing so, seem'd in his ire  
So grander than some ship on fire.

And when the sun had left the sea,  
That laves Abrup, and Blanco laves,  
And left the land to death and me,  
The only thing that I could see  
Was, ever as the light boat lay  
High lifted on the white-back'd waves,  
A head as gray and toss'd as they.

We raised the dead and from his hands  
Pick'd out some shells, clutched as he lay  
And two by two bore him away,  
And wiped his lips of blood and sands.

We bent and scooped a shallow home,  
And laid him warm-wet in his blood,  
Just as the lifted tide a-flood  
Came charging in with mouth a-foam:  
And as we turn'd, the sensate thing  
Reached up, lick'd out its foamy tongue,  
Lick'd out its tongue and tasted blood;  
The white lips to the red earth clung

## THE LAST TASCHASTAS

---

An instant, and then loosening  
All hold just like a living thing,  
Drew back sad-voiced and shuddering,  
All stained with blood, a stripéd flood.

Tc'hastas; a name given to King John by the French, a corruption of chaste; for he was a pure, just man and a great warrior. He was the king of the Rouge (Red) River Indians of Oregon, and his story is glorious with great deeds in defense of his people. When finally overpowered he and his son Moses were put on a ship at Port Orford and sent to Fort Alcatraz in the Golden Gate. In mid-ocean, these two Indians, in irons, rose up, and, after a bloody fight, took the ship. But one had lost a leg, the other an arm, and so they finally had to let loose the crew and soldiers tumbled into the hold, and surrendered themselves again; for the ship was driving helpless in a storm toward the rocks. The king died a prisoner, but his son escaped and never again surrendered. He lives alone near Yreka and is known as "Prince Peg-leg Moses." A daughter of the late Senator Nesmith sends me a picture, taken in 1896, of the king's devoted daughter, Princess Mary, who followed his fortunes in all his battles. She must be nearly one hundred years old. I remember her as an old woman full forty years ago, tall as a soldier, and most terrible in council. I have tried to picture her and her people as I once saw them in a midnight camp before the breaking out of the war; also their actions and utterances, so like some of the old Israelite councils and prophecies. This was the leading piece in my very first book, "Specimens," published in Oregon in 1867-8, if I remember rightly.

## JOAQUIN MURIETTA

*Glintings of day in the darkness,  
Flashings of flint and of steel,  
Blended in gossamer texture  
The ideal and the real,  
Limn'd like the phantom ship shadow,  
Crowding up under the keel.*

I stand beside the mobile sea,  
And sails are spread, and sails are furl'd;  
From farthest corners of the world,  
And fold like white wings wearily.  
Some ships go up, and some go down  
In haste, like traders in a town.

Afar at sea some white ships flee,  
With arms stretch'd like a ghost's to me,  
And cloud-like sails are blown and curl'd,  
Then glide down to the under world.  
As if blown bare in winter blasts  
Of leaf and limb, tall naked masts  
Are rising from the restless sea.  
I seem to see them gleam and shine  
With clinging drops of dripping brine.  
Broad still brown wings flit here and there,  
Thin sea-blue wings wheel everywhere,  
And white wings whistle through the air;  
I hear a thousand sea gulls call.  
And San Francisco Bay is white  
And blue with sail and sea and light.

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold the ocean on the beach  
Kneel lowly down as if in prayer,  
I hear a moan as of despair,

JOAQUIN MURIETTA

While far at sea do toss and reach  
Some things so like white pleading hands  
The ocean's thin and hoary hair  
Is trail'd along the silver'd sands,  
At every sigh and sounding moan.  
The very birds shriek in distress  
And sound the ocean's monotone.  
'Tis not a place for mirthfulness,  
But meditation deep, and prayer,  
And kneelings on the salted sod,  
Where man must own his littleness,  
And know the mightiness of God.

Dared I but say a prophecy,  
As sang the holy men of old,  
Of rock-built cities yet to be  
Along these shining shores of gold,  
Crowding athirst into the sea,  
What wondrous marvels might be told!  
Enough, to know that empire here  
Shall burn her loftiest, brightest star;  
Here art and eloquence shall reign,  
As o'er the wolf-rear'd realm of old;  
Here learn'd and famous from afar,  
To pay their noble court, shall come,  
And shall not seek or see in vain,  
But look and look with wonder dumb.

Afar the bright Sierras lie  
A swaying line of snowy white,  
A fringe of heaven hung in sight  
Against the blue base of the sky.

I look along each gaping gorge,  
I hear a thousand sounding strokes

JOAQUIN MURIETTA

Like giants rending giant oaks,  
Or brawny Vulcan at his forge;  
I see pickaxes flash and shine;  
Hear great wheels whirling in a mine.  
Here winds a thick and yellow thread,  
A moss'd and silver stream instead;  
And trout that leap'd its rippled tide  
Have turn'd upon their sides and died.

Lo! when the last pick in the mine  
Lies rusting red with idleness,  
And rot yon cabins in the mold,  
And wheels no more croak in distress,  
And tall pines reassert command,  
Sweet bards along this sunset shore  
Their mellow melodies will pour;  
Will charm as charmers very wise,  
Will strike the harp with master hand,  
Will sound unto the vaulted skies,  
The valor of these men of old—  
These mighty men of 'Forty-nine;  
Will sweetly sing and proudly say,  
Long, long agone there was a day  
When there were giants in the land.

\* \* \* \*

Now who rides rushing on the sight  
Hard down yon rocky long defile,  
Swift as an eagle in his flight,  
Fierce as winter's storm at night  
Blown from the bleak Sierra's height!  
Such reckless rider!—I do ween  
No mortal man his like has seen.  
And yet, but for his long serape  
All flowing loose, and black as crape,

## JOAQUIN MURIETTA

And long silk locks of blackest hair  
All streaming wildly in the breeze,  
You might believe him in a chair,  
Or chatting at some country fair  
He rides so grandly at his ease.

But now he grasps a tighter rein,  
A red rein wrought in golden chain,  
And in his tapidaros stands,  
Turns, shouts defiance at his foe.  
And now he calmly bares his brow  
As if to challenge fate, and now  
His hand drops to his saddle-bow  
And clutches something gleaming there  
As if to something more than dare.

The stray winds lift the raven curls,  
Soft as a fair Castilian girl's,  
And bare a brow so manly, high,  
Its every feature does belie  
The thought he is compell'd to fly ;  
A brow as open as the sky  
On which you gaze and gaze again  
As on a picture you have seen  
And often sought to see in vain,  
A brow of blended pride and pain,  
That seems to hold a tale of woe  
Or wonder, that you fain would know  
A boy's brow, cut as with a knife,  
With many a dubious deed in life.

Again he grasps his glitt'ring rein,  
And, wheeling like a hurricane,  
Defying wood, or stone, or flood,  
Is dashing down the gorge again.

Oh, never yet has prouder steed  
 Borne master nobler in his need!  
 There is a glory in his eye  
 That seems to dare and to defy  
 Pursuit, or time, or space, or race.  
 His body is the type of speed,  
 While from his nostril to his heel  
 Are muscles as if made of steel.

What crimes have made that red hand red?  
 What wrongs have written that young face  
 With lines of thought so out of place?  
 Where flies he? And from whence has fled?  
 And what his lineage and race?  
 What glitters in his heavy belt,  
 And from his furr'd cantenas gleam?  
 What on his bosom that doth seem  
 A diamond bright or dagger's hilt?  
 The iron hoofs that still resound  
 Like thunder from the yielding ground  
 Alone reply; and now the plain,  
 Quick as you breathe and gaze again,  
 Is won, and all pursuit is vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

I stand upon a mountain rim,  
 Stone-paved and pattern'd as a street;  
 A rock-lipped cañon plunging south,  
 As if it were earth's open'd mouth,  
 Yawns deep and darkling at my feet;  
 So deep, so distant, and so dim  
 Its waters wind, a yellow thread,  
 And call so faintly and so far,  
 I turn aside my swooning head.  
 I feel a fierce impulse to leap

Adown the beetling precipice,  
Like some lone, lost, uncertain star;  
To plunge into a place unknown,  
And win a world, all, all my own;  
Or if I might not meet such bliss,  
At least escape the curse of this.

I gaze again. A gleaming star  
Shines back as from some mossy well  
Reflected from blue fields afar.  
Brown hawks are wheeling here and there,  
And up and down the broken wall.  
Cling clumps of dark green chaparral,  
While from the rent rocks, grey and bare;  
Blue junipers hang in the air.

Here, cedars sweep the stream and here,  
Among the boulders moss'd and brown  
That time and storms have toppled down  
From towers undefiled by man,  
Low cabins nestle as in fear,  
And look no taller than a span.  
From low and shapeless chimneys rise  
Some tall straight columns of blue smoke,  
And weld them to the bluer skies;  
While sounding down the somber gorge  
I hear the steady pickax stroke,  
As if upon a flashing forge.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another scene, another sound!—  
Sharp shots are fretting through the air,  
Red knives are flashing everywhere,  
And here and there the yellow flood  
Is purpled with warm smoking blood.

The brown hawk swoops low to the ground,  
And nimble chipmunks, small and still,  
Dart striped lines across the sill  
That manly feet shall press no more.  
The flume lies warping in the sun,  
The pan sits empty by the door,  
The pickax on its bedrock floor,  
Lies rusting in the silent mine.  
There comes no single sound nor sign  
Of life, beside yon monks in brown  
That dart their dim shapes up and down  
The rocks that swelter in the sun;  
But dashing down yon rocky spur,  
Where scarce a hawk would dare to whirr,  
A horseman holds his reckless flight.  
He wears a flowing black capote,  
While over all do flow and float  
Long locks of hair as dark as night,  
And hands are red that erst were white.

All up and down the land today  
Black desolation and despair  
It seems have set and settled there,  
With none to frighten them away.  
Like sentries watching by the way  
Black chimneys topple in the air,  
And seem to say, Go back, beware!  
While up around the mountain's rim  
Are clouds of smoke, so still and grim  
They look as they are fasten'd there.

A lonely stillness, so like death,  
So touches, terrifies all things,  
That even rooks that fly o'erhead  
Are hush'd, and seem to hold their breath,

To fly with sullen, muffled wings,  
And heavy as if made of lead.  
Some skulls that crumble to the touch,  
Some joints of thin and chalk-like bone,  
A tall black chimney, all alone,  
That leans as if upon a crutch.  
Alone are left to mark or tell,  
Instead of cross or cryptic stone,  
Where Joaquin stood and brave men fell.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sun is red and flush'd and dry,  
And fretted from his weary beat  
Across the hot and desert sky,  
And swollen as from overheat,  
And failing too; for see, he sinks  
Swift as a ball of burnish'd ore:  
It may be fancy, but methinks  
He never fell so fast before.

I hear the neighing of hot steeds,  
I see the marshaling of men  
That silent move among the trees  
As busily as swarming bees  
With step and stealthiness profound,  
On carpetings of spindled weeds,  
Without a syllable or sound  
Save clashing of their burnish'd arms,  
Clinking dull, deathlike alarms—  
Grim bearded men and brawny men  
That grope among the ghostly trees.  
Were ever silent men as these  
Was ever somber forest deep  
And dark as this? Here one might sleep

While all the weary years went round,  
Nor wake nor weep for sun or sound.

A stone's throw to the right, a rock  
Has rear'd his head among the stars—  
An island in the upper deep—  
And on his front a thousand scars  
Of thunder's crash and earthquake's shock  
Are seam'd as if by sabre's sweep  
Of gods, enraged that he should rear  
His front amid their realms of air.

What moves along his beetling brow,  
So small, so indistinct and far,  
This side yon blazing evening star,  
Seen through that redwood's shifting bough?  
A lookout on the world below?  
A watcher for the friend—or foe?  
This still troop's sentry it must be,  
Yet seems no taller than my knee.

But for the grandeur of this gloom,  
And for the chafing steeds' alarms,  
And brown men's sullen clash of arms,  
This were but as a living tomb.  
These weeds are spindled, pale and white,  
As if nor sunshine, life, nor light  
Had ever reach'd this forest's heart.  
Above, the redwood boughs entwine  
As dense as copse of tangled vine—  
Above, so fearfully afar,  
It seems as 'twere a lesser sky,  
A sky without a moon or star,  
The moss'd boughs are so thick and high.  
At every lisp of leaf I start!

JOAQUIN MURIETTA

Would I could hear a cricket trill,  
Or hear yon sentry from his hill,  
The place does seem so deathly still.  
But see a sudden lifted hand  
From one who still and sullen stands,  
With black serape and bloody hands,  
And coldly gives his brief command.

They mount—away! Quick on his heel  
He turns and grasps his gleaming steel—  
Then sadly smiles, and stoops to kiss  
An upturn'd face so sweetly fair,  
So sadly, saintly, purely rare,  
So rich of blessedness and bliss!  
I know she is not flesh and blood,  
But some sweet spirit of this wood;  
I know it by her wealth of hair,  
And step on the unyielding air;  
Her seamless robe of shining white,  
Her soul-deep eyes of darkest night;  
But over all and more than all  
That can be said or can befall,  
That tongue can tell or pen can trace,  
That wondrous witchery of face.

Between the trees I see him stride  
To where a red steed fretting stands  
Impatient for his lord's commands:  
And she glides noiseless at his side.

One hand toys with her waving hair,  
Soft lifting from her shoulders bare;  
The other holds the loosen'd rein,  
And rests upon the swelling mane  
That curls the curved neck o'er and o'er,

JOAQUIN MURIETTA

Like waves that swirl along the shore.  
He hears the last retreating sound  
Of iron on volcanic stone,  
That echoes far from peak to plain,  
And 'neath the dense wood's sable zone,  
He peers the dark Sierras down.

His hand forsakes her raven hair,  
His eyes have an unearthly glare;  
She shrinks and shudders at his side  
Then lifts to his her moisten'd eyes,  
And only looks her sad replies.  
A sullenness his soul entralls,  
A silence born of hate and pride;  
His fierce volcanic heart so deep  
Is stirr'd, his teeth, despite his will,  
Do chatter as if in a chill;  
His very dagger at his side  
Does shake and rattle in its sheath,  
As blades of brown grass in a gale  
Do rustle on the frosted heath:  
And yet he does not bend or weep,  
But sudden mounts, then leans him o'er  
To breathe her hot breath but once more.  
I do not mark the prison'd sighs,  
I do not meet the moisten'd eyes,  
The while he leans him from his place  
Down to her sweet uplifted face.

A low sweet melody is heard  
Like cooing of some Belize bird,  
So fine it does not touch the air,  
So faint it stirs not anywhere;  
Faint as the falling of the dew,  
Low as a pure unutter'd prayer,

## JOAQUIN MURIETTA

The meeting, mingling, as it were,  
In that one long, last, silent kiss  
Of souls in paradisal bliss.

“You must not, shall not, shall not go!  
To die and leave me here to die!  
Enough of vengeance, Love and I?  
I die for home and—Mexico.”

He leans, he plucks her to his breast,  
As plucking Mariposa’s flower,  
And now she crouches in her rest  
As resting in some rosy bower.

Erect, again he grasps the rein!  
I see his black steed plunge and poise  
And beat the air with iron feet,  
And curve his noble glossy neck,  
And toss on high his swelling mane,  
And leap—away! he spurns the rein!  
He flies so fearfully and fleet,  
But for the hot hoofs’ ringing noise  
’Twould seem as if he were on wings.

And they are gone! Gone like a breath,  
Gone like a white sail seen at night  
A moment, and then lost to sight;  
Gone like a star you look upon,  
That glimmers to a bead, a speck,  
Then softly melts into the dawn,  
And all is still and dark as death,  
And who shall sing, for who may know  
That mad, glad ride to Mexico?

## JOAQUIN MURIETTA

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The third poem in my first London book was called "California," but it was called "Joaquin" in the Oregon book. And it was from this that I was, in derision, called "Joaquin." I kept the name and the poem, too, till both were at least respected. But my elder brother, who had better judgment and finer taste than I, thought it too wild and bloody; and so by degrees it has been allowed to disappear, except this fragment, although a small book of itself, to begin with.



## BITS FROM INA, A DRAMA

*Sad song of the wind in the mountains  
And the sea wave of grass on the plain,  
That breaks in bloom foam by the fountains,  
And forests, that breaketh again  
On the mountains, as breaketh a main.*

*Bold thoughts that were strong as the grizzlies,  
Now weak in their prison of words;  
Bright fancies that flash'd like the glaciers,  
Now dimm'd like the luster of birds,  
And butterflies huddled as herds.*

*Sad symphony, wild and unmeasured,  
Weed warp, and woof woven in strouds  
Strange truths that a stray soul had treasured,  
Truths seen as through folding of shrouds  
Or as stars through the rolling of clouds.*

### SCENE I.

*A Hacienda near Tezcoco, Mexico. Young  
DON CARLOS alone looking out on the  
moonlit mountain.*

DON CARLOS.

Popocatapetl looms lone like an island,  
Above white cloud-waves that break up against  
him;  
Around him white buttes in the moonlight are  
flashing  
Like silver tents pitch'd in the fair fields of  
heaven

While standing in line, in their snows everlasting,  
Flash peaks, as my eyes into heaven are lifted,  
Like mile-stones that lead to the city Eternal.

Ofttime when the sun and the sea lay together,  
Red-welded as one, in their red bed of lovers,  
Embracing and blushing like loves newly wedded,  
I have trod on the trailing crape fringes of  
twilight,  
And stood there and listen'd, and lean'd with  
lips parted,  
Till lordly peaks wrapp'd them, as chill night  
blew over,  
In great cloaks of sable, like proud somber  
Spaniards,  
And stalk'd from my presence down night's  
corridors.

When the red-curtained West has bent red as  
with weeping  
Low over the couch where the prone day lay  
dying,  
I have stood with brow lifted, confronting the  
mountains  
That held their white faces of snow in the  
heavens,  
And said, "It is theirs to array them so purely,  
Because of their nearness to the temple eternal";  
And childlike have said, "They are fair resting  
places  
For the dear weary dead on their way up to  
heaven."

But my soul is not with you tonight, mighty  
mountains:

It is held to the levels of earth by an angel  
Far more than a star, earth fallen or unfall'n,  
Yet fierce in her follies and headstrong and  
stronger  
Than streams of the sea running in with the  
billows.

Very well. Let him woo, let him thrust his  
white whiskers  
And lips pale and purple with death, in between  
us;  
Let her wed, as she wills, for the gold of the  
graybeard.  
I will set my face for you, O mountains, my  
brothers,  
For I yet have my honor, my conscience and  
freedom,  
My fleet-footed mustang, and pistols rich  
silver'd;  
I will turn as the earth turns her back on the  
sun,  
But return to the light of her eyes never more,  
While noons have a night and white seas have  
a shore.

INA, *approaching*.

INA.

"I have come, dear Don Carlos, to say you  
farewell,  
I shall wed with Don Castro at dawn of to-  
morrow,  
And be all his own—firm, honest and faithful.

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BITS FROM INA, A DRAMA

---

I have promised this thing ; that I will keep my promise

You who do know me care never to question.

I have mastered myself to say this thing to you ;  
Hear me : be strong, then, and say adieu bravely ;  
The world is his own who will brave its bleak hours.

Dare, then, to confront the cold days in their column ;

As they march down upon you, stand, hew them to pieces,

One after another, as you would a fierce foeman,  
Till not one abideth between two true bosoms."

[DON CARLOS, *with a laugh of scorn, flies from the veranda, mounts horse, and disappears.*]

INA (*looking out into the night, after a long silence.*).

How doleful the night hawk screams in the heavens,

How dismally gibbers the gray coyote !

Afar to the south now the turbulent thunder,  
Mine equal, my brother, my soul's one companion,

Talks low in his sleep like a giant deep troubled ;  
Talks fierce in accord with my own stormy spirit.

SCENE II.

*Sunset on a spur of Mount Hood. LAMONTE contemplates the scene.*

LAMONTE.

A flushed and weary messenger a-west  
Is standing at the half-closed door of day,

As he would say, Good night ; and now his bright  
Red cap he tips to me and turns his face,  
Were it an unholy thing to say, an angel now  
Beside the door stood with uplifted seal ?  
Behold the door seal'd with that blood red seal  
Now burning, spreading o'er the mighty West.  
Never again shall that dead day arise  
Therefrom, but must be born and come anew.

The tawny, solemn Night, child of the East,  
Her mournful robe trails o'er the distant woods,  
And comes this way with firm and stately step.  
Afront, and very high, she wears a shield,  
A plate of silver, and upon her brow  
The radiant Venus burns, a pretty lamp.  
Behold ! how in her gorgeous flow of hair  
Do gleam a million mellow yellow gems,  
That spill their molten gold upon the dewy grass.  
Now throned on boundless plains, and gazing  
down  
So calmly on the red-seal'd tomb of day,  
She rests her form against the Rocky Mountains,  
And rules with silent power a peaceful world.

'Tis midnight now. The bent and broken  
moon,  
All batter'd, black, as from a thousand battles,  
Hangs silent on the purple walls of heaven.  
The angel warrior, guard of the gates eternal,  
In battle-harness girt, sleeps on the field :  
But when tomorrow comes, when wicked men  
That fret the patient earth are all astir,  
He will resume his shield, and, facing earthward,  
The gates of heaven guard from sins of earth.

'Tis morn. Behold the kingly day now leaps  
The eastern wall of earth, bright sword in hand,  
And clad in flowing robe of mellow light,  
Like to a king that has regain'd his throne,  
He warms his drooping subjects into joy,  
That rise renewed to do him fealty,  
And rules with pomp the universal world.

DON CARLOS *ascends the mountain, gesticulating and talking to himself.*

DON CARLOS.

Oh, for a name that black-eyed maids would  
sigh  
And lean with parted lips at mention of ;  
That I should seem so tall in minds of men  
That I might walk beneath the arch of heaven,  
And pluck the ripe red stars as I pass'd on,  
As favor'd guests do pluck the purple grapes  
That hang above the humble entrance way  
Of palm-thatch'd mountain inn of Mexico.

Oh, I would give the green leaves of my life  
For something grand, for real and undream'd  
deeds !

To wear a mantle, broad and richly gemm'd  
As purple heaven fringed with gold at sunset ;  
To wear a crown as dazzling as the sun,  
And, holding up a scepter lightning-charged,  
Stride out among the stars as I once strode  
A barefoot boy among the buttercups.

Alas ! I am so restless. There is that  
Within me doth rebel and rise against

The all I am and half I see in others;  
And were't not for contempt of coward act  
Of flying all defeated from the world,  
As if I feared and dared not face its ills,  
I should ere this have known, known more or  
    less

Than any flesh that frets this sullen earth.  
I know not where such thoughts will lead me to:  
I have had fear that they would drive me mad,  
And then have flattered my weak self, and said  
The soul's outgrown the body—yea, the soul  
Aspires to the stars, and in its struggles upward  
Make the dull flesh quiver as an aspen.

LAMONTE.

What waif is this cast here upon my shore,  
From seas of subtle and most selfish men?

DON CARLOS.

Of subtle and most selfish men!—ah, that's the  
    term!  
And if you be but earnest in your spleen,  
And other sex across man's shoulders lash,  
I'll stand beside you on this crag and howl  
And hurl my clenched fists down upon their  
    heads,  
Till I am hoarse as yonder cataract.

LAMONTE.

Why, no, my friend, I'll not consent to that.  
No true man yet has ever woman cursed.  
And I—I do not hate my fellow man,

For man by nature bears within himself  
Nobility that makes him half a god;  
But as in somewise he hath made himself,  
His universal thirst for gold and pomp,  
And purchased fleeting fame and bubble honors,  
Forgetting good, so mocking helpless age,  
And rushing roughshod o'er lowly merit,  
I hold him but a sorry worm indeed;  
And so have turn'd me quietly aside  
To know the majesty of peaceful woods.

DON CARLOS (*as if alone*).

The fabled font of youth led many fools,  
Zealous in its pursuit, to hapless death;  
And yet this thirst for fame, this hot ambition,  
This soft-toned syren-tongue, enchanting Fame,  
Doth lead me headlong on to equal folly,  
Like to a wild bird charm'd by shining coils  
And swift mesmeric glance of deadly snake:  
I would not break the charm, but win a world  
Or die with curses blistering my lips.

LAMONTE.

Give up ambition, petty pride—  
By pride the angels fell.

DON CARLOS.

By pride they reached a place from whence  
to fall.

LAMONTE.

You startle me! I am unused to hear  
Men talk these fierce and bitter thoughts; and  
yet  
In closed recesses of my soul was once  
A dark and gloomy chamber where they dwelt.  
Give up ambition—yea, crush such thoughts  
As you would crush from hearth a scorpion  
brood;  
For, mark me well, they'll get the mastery,  
And drive you on to death—or worse, across  
A thousand ruin'd homes and broken hearts.

DON CARLOS.

Give up ambition! Oh, rather than to die  
And glide a lonely, nameless, shivering ghost  
Down time's dark tide of utter nothingness,  
I'd write a name in blood and orphans' tears.  
The temple-burner wiser was than kings.

LAMONTE.

And would you dare the curse of man and—

DON CARLOS.

Dare the curse of man!  
I'd dare the fearful curse of God!  
I'd build a pyramid of whitest skulls,  
And step therefrom unto the spotted moon,  
And thence to stars, and thence to central suns.  
Then with one grand and mighty leap would  
land

Unhinder'd on the shining shore of heaven,  
And, sword in hand, unbared and unabash'd,  
Would stand bold forth in presence of the God  
Of gods, and on the jewel'd inner side  
The walls of heaven, carve with keen Damascus  
steel  
And, highest up, a grand and titled name  
That time nor tide could touch or tarnish ever.

LAMONTE.

Seek not to crop above the heads of men  
To be a better mark for envy's shafts.  
Come to my peaceful home, and leave behind  
These stormy thoughts and daring aspirations.  
All earthly power is but a thing comparative.  
Is not a petty chief of some lone isle,  
With half a dozen nude and starving subjects,  
As much a king as he the Czar of Rusk?  
In yonder sweet retreat and balmy place  
I'll abdicate, and you be chief indeed.  
There you will reign and tell me of the world,  
Its life and lights, its sins and sickly shadows.  
The pheasant will reveille beat at morn,  
And rouse us to the battle of the day.  
My swarthy subjects will in circle sit,  
And, gazing on your noble presence, deem  
You great indeed, and call you chief of chiefs;  
And, knowing no one greater than yourself  
In all the leafy borders of your realm,  
'Gainst what can pride or poor ambition chafe?

"Twill be a kingdom without king, save you,  
More broad than that the cruel Cortes won,  
With subjects truer than he ever knew,

BITS FROM INA, A DRAMA

That know no law but only nature's law,  
And no religion know but that of love.  
There truth and beauty are, for there is Nature,  
Serene and simple. She will be our priestess,  
And in her calm and uncomplaining face  
We two will read her rubric and be wise. . . .

DON CARLOS.

Why, truly now, this fierce and broken land,  
Seen through your eyes, assumes a fairer shape.  
Lead up, for you are nearer God than I.

SCENE III.

INA, *in black, alone. Midnight.*

INA.

I weep? I weep? I laugh to think of it!  
I lift my dark brow to the breath of the ocean,  
Soft kissing me now like the lips of my mother,  
And laugh low and long as I crush the brown  
grasses,  
To think I should weep! Why, I never wept—  
never,  
Not even in punishments dealt me in childhood!  
Yea, all of my wrongs and my bitterness buried  
In my brave baby heart, all alone and unfriended.  
And I pitied, with proud and disdainfullest pity,  
The weak who would weep, and I laugh'd at the  
folly  
Of those who could laugh and make merry with  
playthings.

Nay, I will not weep now over that I desired.  
Desired? Yes: I to myself dare confess it,  
Ah, too, to the world should it question too  
closely,  
And bathe me and sport in a deep sea of candor.

Let the world be deceived; it insists upon it:  
Let it bundle me round in its black woe-garments;  
But I, self with self—my free soul fearless—  
Am frank as the sun, nor the toss of a copper  
Care I if the world call it good or evil.  
I am glad tonight, and in new-born freedom  
Forget all earth with my old companions,—  
The moon and the stars and the moon-clad ocean.  
I am face to face with the stars that know me,  
And gaze as I gazed in the eyes of my mother,  
Forgetting the city and the coarse things in it;  
For there's naught but God in the shape of  
mortal,  
Save one—my wandering, wild boy-lover—  
That I esteem worth a stale banana.

The hair hangs heavy and is warm on my  
shoulder,  
And is thick with the odors of balm and of  
blossom,  
The great bay sleeps with the ships on her  
bosom;  
Through the Golden Gate, to the left hand  
yonder,  
The white sea lies in a deep sleep, breathing,  
The father of melody, mother of measure.

SCENE IV.

*A wood by a rivulet on a spur of Mount Hood, overlooking the Columbia. LAMONTE and DON CARLOS, on their way to the camp, are reposing under the shadow of the forest. Some deer are observed descending to the brook, and DON CARLOS seizes his rifle.*

LAMONTE.

Nay, nay, my friend, strike not from your covert,  
Strike like a serpent in the grass well hidden?  
What, steal into their homes, and, when they,  
thirsting,  
And all unsuspecting, come down in couples  
And dip brown muzzles in the mossy brink,  
Then shoot them down without chance to fly—  
The only means that God has given them,  
Poor, unarm'd mutes, to baffle man's cunning?  
Ah, now I see you had not thought of this!  
The hare is fleet, and is most quick at sound,  
His coat is changed with the changing fields;  
Yon deer turn brown when the leaves turn  
brown;  
The dog has teeth, the cat has talons,  
A man has craft and sinewy arms:  
All things that live have some means of defense  
All, all—save only fair lovely woman.

DON CARLOS.

Nay, she has her tongue; is armed to the teeth.

LAMONTE.

Thou Timon, what can 'scape your bitterness?  
But for this sweet content of Nature here,  
Upon whose breast we now recline and rest,  
Why, you might lift your voice and rail at her!

DON CARLOS.

Oh, I am out of patience with your faith!  
What! She content and peaceful, uncom-  
plaining?

I've seen her fretted like a lion caged,  
Chafe like a peevish woman cross'd and churl'd,  
Tramping and champing like a whelpless bear;  
Have seen her weep till earth was wet with tears,  
Then turn all smiles—a jade that won her point?  
Have seen her tear the hoary hair of ocean,  
While he, himself full half a world, would moan  
And roll and toss his clumsy hands all day  
To earth like some great helpless babe,  
Rude-rock'd and cradled by an unkind nurse,  
Then stain her snowy hem with salt-sea tears;  
And when the peaceful, mellow moon came forth,  
To walk and meditate among the blooms  
That make so blest the upper purple fields,  
This wroth dyspeptic sea ran after her  
With all his soul, as if to pour himself,  
All sick and helpless, in her snowy lap.  
Content! Oh, she has cracked the ribs of earth  
And made her shake poor trembling man from  
off  
Her back, e'en as a grizzly shakes the hounds;  
She has upheaved her rocky spine against  
The flowing robes of the eternal God.

LAMONTE.

There once was one of nature like to this:  
He stood a barehead boy upon a cliff  
Pine-crown'd, that hung high o'er a bleak north  
    sea  
His long hair stream'd and flashed like yellow  
    silk,  
His sea-blue eyes lay deep and still as lakes  
O'erhung by mountains, arch'd in virgin snow;  
And far astray, and friendless and alone,  
A tropic bird blown through the north frost wind,  
He stood above the sea in the cold white moon,  
His thin face lifted to the flashing stars.  
He talk'd familiarly and face to face  
With the eternal God, in solemn night,  
Confronting Him with free and flippant air  
As one confronts a merchant o'er his counter,  
And in vehement blasphemy did say:  
"God, put aside this world—show me another!  
God, this world's but a cheat—hand down an-  
    other!  
I will not buy—not have it as a gift.  
Put this aside and hand me down another—  
Another, and another, still another,  
Till I have tried the fairest world that hangs  
Upon the walls and broad dome of your shop.  
For I am proud of soul and regal born,  
And will not have a cheap and cheating world."

DON CARLOS.

The noble youth! So God gave him another?

LAMONTE.

A bear, as in old time, came from the woods  
And tare him there upon that storm-swept cliff—  
A grim and grizzled bear, like unto hunger,  
A tall ship sail'd adown the sea next morn,  
And, standing with his glass upon the prow,  
The captain saw a vulture on a cliff,  
Gorging, and pecking, stretching his long neck  
Bracing his raven plumes against the wind,  
Fretting the tempest with his sable feathers.

*A Young Poet ascends the mountain and approaches.*

DON CARLOS.

Ho! ho! whom have we here? Talk of the  
devil,  
And he's at hand. Say, who are you, and  
whence?

POET.

I am a poet, and dwell down by the sea.

DON CARLOS.

A poet! a poet, forsooth! A hungry fool!  
Would you know what it means to be a poet  
now?

It is to want a friend, to want a home,  
A country, money,—ay, to want a meal.  
It is not wise to be a poet now,  
For, oh, the world it has so modest grown

BITS FROM INA, A DRAMA

---

It will not praise a poet to his face,  
But waits till he is dead some hundred years,  
Then uprears marbles cold and stupid as itself.

[POET *rises to go.*]

DON CARLOS.

Why, what's the haste? You'll reach there  
soon enough.

POET.

Reach where?

DON CARLOS.

The inn to which all earthly roads do tend:  
The "neat apartments furnish'd—see within";  
The "furnish'd rooms for quiet, single gentlemen";  
The narrow six-by-two where you will lie  
With cold blue nose up-pointing to the grass,  
Labell'd and box'd, and ready all for shipment.

POET (*loosening hair and letting fall a mantle.*)

Ah me! my Don Carlos, look kindly upon me!  
With my hand on your arm and my dark brow  
lifted  
Full level to yours, do you not now know me?  
'Tis I, your INA, whom you loved by the ocean,  
In the warm-spiced winds from the far Cathay.

DON CARLOS (*bitterly.*)

With the smell of the dead man still upon you!  
Your dark hair wet from his death-damp forehead!

You are not my Ina, for she is a memory.  
A marble chisell'd, in my heart's dark chamber  
Set up for ever, and naught can change her;  
And you are a stranger, and the gulf between us  
Is wide as the plains, and as deep as Pacific.

And now, good night. In your serape folded  
Hard by in the light of the pine-knot fire,  
Sleep you as sound as you will be welcome;  
And on the morrow—now mark me, madam—  
When tomorrow comes, why, you will turn you  
To the right or left as did Father Abram.  
Good night, for ever and for aye, good by;  
My bitter is sweet and your truth is a lie.

INA (*letting go his arm and stepping back.*)

Well, then! 'tis over, and 'tis well thus ended;  
I am well escaped from my life's devotion.  
The waters of bliss are a waste of bitterness;  
The day of joy I did join hands over,  
As a bow of promise when my years were weary,  
And set high up as a brazen serpent  
To look upon when I else had fainted  
In burning deserts, while you sipp'd ices  
And snowy sherbets, and roam'd unfetter'd,  
Is a deadly asp in the fruit and flowers  
That you in your bitterness now bear to me;

BITS FROM INA, A DRAMA

But its fangs unfasten and it glides down from  
me,  
From a Cleopatra of cold white marble.

I have but done what I would do over,  
Did I find one worthy of so much devotion;  
And, standing here with my clean hands folded  
Above a bosom whose crime is courage,  
The only regret that my heart discovers  
Is that I should do and have dared so greatly  
For the love of one who deserved so little.

Nay! say no more, nor attempt to approach  
me!  
This ten feet line lying now between us  
Shall never be less while the land has measure.  
See! night is forgetting the east in the heavens;  
The birds pipe shrill and the beasts howl answer.



## EVEN SO

*Sierras, and eternal tents  
Of snow that flash o'er battlements  
Of mountains! My land of the sun,  
Am I not true? have I not done  
All things for thine, for thee alone,  
O sun-land, sea-land, thou mine own?  
Be my reward some little place  
To pitch my tent, some tree and vine  
Where I may sit with lifted face,  
And drink the sun as drinking wine:  
Where sweeps the Oregon, and where  
White storms carouse on perfumed air.*

In the shadows a-west of the sunset mountains,  
Where old-time giants had dwelt and peopled,  
And built up cities and castled battlements,  
And rear'd up pillars that pierced the heavens,  
A poet dwelt of the book of Nature—  
An ardent lover of the pure and beautiful.  
Devoutest lover of the true and beautiful.  
Profoundest lover of the grand and beautiful—  
With heart all impulse, and intensest passion,  
Who believed in love as in God eternal—  
A dream while the waken'd world went over,  
An Indian summer of the singing seasons;  
And he sang wild songs like the wind in cedars,  
Was tempest-toss'd as the pines, yet ever  
As fix'd in faith as they in the mountains.

He had heard of a name as one hears of a  
princess,  
Her glory had come unto him in stories;  
From afar he had look'd as entranced upon her;

He gave her name to the wind in measures,  
And he heard her name in the deep-voiced cedars,  
And afar in the winds rolling on like the billows,  
Her name in the name of another for ever  
Gave all his numbers their grandest strophes ;  
Enshrined her image in his heart's high temple,  
And saint-like held her, too sacred for mortal.

\* \* \* \* \*

He came to fall like a king of the forest  
Caught in the strong storm arms of the wrestler ;  
Forgetting his songs, his crags and his moun-  
tains,  
And nearly his God, in his wild deep passion ;  
And when he had won her and turn'd him home-  
ward,  
With the holiest pledges love gives its lover,  
The mountain route was as strewn with roses.

Can high love then be a thing unholy,  
To make us better and bless'd supremely ?  
The day was fix'd for the feast and nuptials ;  
He crazed with impatience at the tardy hours ;  
He flew in the face of old Time as a tyrant ;  
He had fought the days that stood still between  
them,  
Fought one by one, as you fight with a foeman,  
Had they been animate and sensate beings.

At last then the hour came coldly forward.  
When Mars was trailing his lance on the moun-  
tains  
He rein'd his steed and look'd down in the cañon  
To where she dwelt, with a heart of fire.  
He kiss'd his hand to the smoke slow curling,

Then bow'd his head in devoutest blessing.  
His spotted courser did plunge and fret him  
Beneath his gay silken-fringed carona  
And toss his neck in a black-mane banner'd;  
Then all afoam, plunging iron-footed,  
Dash'd him down with a wild impatience.

A coldness met him, like the breath of a  
cavern,  
As he joyously hasten'd across the threshold.  
She came, and coldly she spoke and scornful,  
In answer to warm and impulsive passion.  
All things did array them in shapes most hateful,  
And life did seem but a jest intolerable.  
He dared to question her why this estrangement:  
She spoke with a strange and stiff indifference,  
And bade him go on all alone life's journey.

Then stern and tall he did stand up before her,  
And gaze dark-brow'd through the low narrow  
casement.  
For a time, as if warring in thought with a  
passion;  
Then, crushing hard down the hot welling bitterness,  
He folded his form in a sullen silentness,  
And turned for ever away from her presence;  
Bearing his sorrow like some great burden,  
Like a black nightmare in his hot heart muffled;  
With his faith in the truth of woman broken.

\* \* \* \* \*

’Mid Theban pillars, where sang the Pindar,  
Breathing the breath of the Grecian islands,  
Breathing in spices and olive and myrtle,

Counting the caravans, curl'd and snowy,  
Slow journeying over his head to Mecca  
Or the high Christ land of most holy memory,  
Counting the clouds through the boughs above  
him,

That brush'd white marbles that time had chisel'd  
And rear'd as tombs on the great dead city,  
Letter'd with solemn but unread moral—  
A poet rested in the red-hot summer.  
He took no note of the things about him,  
But dream'd and counted the clouds above him;  
His soul was troubled, and his sad heart's Mecca  
Was a miner's home far over the ocean,  
Banner'd by pines that did brush blue heaven.

When the sun went down on the bronzed  
Morea,  
He read to himself from the lines of sorrow  
That came as a wail from the one he worshipp'd,  
Sent over the seas by an old companion:  
They spoke no word of him, or remembrance.  
And he was most sad, for he felt forgotten,  
And said: "In the leaves of her fair heart's  
album  
She has cover'd my face with the face of an-  
other.  
Let the great sea lift like a wall between us,  
High-back'd, with his mane of white storms for  
ever—  
I shall learn to love, I shall wed my sorrow,  
I shall take as a spouse the days that are perish'd;  
I shall dwell in a land where the march of genius  
Made tracks in marble in the days of giants;  
I shall sit in the ruins where sat the Marius,

Gray with the ghosts of the great departed.”  
And then he said in the solemn twilight . . .

“Strangely wooing are yon worlds above us,  
Strangely beautiful is the Faith of Islam,  
Strangely sweet are the songs of Solomon,  
Strangely tender are the teachings of Jesus,  
Strangely cold is the sun on the mountains,  
Strangely mellow is the moon on old ruins,  
Strangely pleasant are the stolen waters,  
Strangely lighted is the North night region,  
Strangely strong are the streams in the ocean,  
Strangely true are the tales of the Orient,  
But stranger than all are the ways of women.”

His head on his hands and his hands on the  
marble,  
Alone in the midnight he slept in the ruins;  
And a form was before him white mantled in  
moonlight,  
And bitter he said to the one he had worshipp'd—

“Your hands in mine, your face, your eyes  
Look level into mine, and mine  
Are not abashed in anywise  
As eyes were in an elden syne.  
Perhaps the pulse is colder now,  
And blood comes tamer to the brow  
Because of hot blood long ago . . . .  
Withdraw your hand? . . . . Well, be it so,  
And turn your bent head slow sidewise,  
For recollections are as seas  
That come and go in tides, and these  
Are flood tides filling to the eyes.

“How strange that you above the vale  
And I below the mountain wall  
Should walk and meet! . . . Why, you are pale! . . .  
Strange meeting on the mountain fringe! . . .  
. . . . More strange we ever met at all! . . . .  
Tides come and go, we know their time;  
The moon, we know her wane or prime;  
But who knows how the heart may hinge?

“You stand before me here to-night,  
But not beside me, not beside—  
Are beautiful, but not a bride.  
Some things I recollect aright,  
Though full a dozen years are done  
Since we two met one winter night—  
Since I was crush’d as by a fall;  
For I have watch’d and pray’d through all  
The shining circles of the sun.

“I saw you where sad cedars wave;  
I sought you in the dewy eve  
When shining crickets thrill and grieve;  
You smiled, and I became a slave.  
A slave! I worship’d you at night,  
When all the blue field blossom’d red  
With dewy roses overhead  
In sweet and delicate delight.  
I was devout. I knelt that night  
To Him who doeth all things well.  
I tried in vain to break the spell;  
My prison’d soul refused to rise  
And image saints in Paradise,  
While one was here before my eyes.

“Some things are sooner marr’d than made.  
A frost fell on a soul that night,  
And one was black that erst was white.  
And you forget the place—the night!  
Forget that aught was done or said—  
Say this has pass’d a long decade—  
Say not a single tear was shed—  
Say you forget these little things!  
Is not your recollection loth?  
Well, little bees have bitter stings,  
And I remember for us both.

“No, not a tear. Do men complain?  
The outer wound will show a stain,  
And we may shriek at idle pain;  
But pierce the heart, and not a word,  
Or wail, or sign, is seen or heard.

“I did not blame—I do not blame,  
My wild heart turns to you the same,  
Such as it is; but oh, its meed  
Of faithfulness and trust and truth,  
And earnest confidence of youth,  
I caution, you, is small indeed.

“I follow’d you, I worshipp’d you  
And I would follow, worship still;  
But if I felt the blight and chill  
Of frosts in my uncheerful spring,  
And show it now in riper years  
In answer to this love you bring—  
In answer to this second love,  
This wail of an unmated dove,  
In cautious answer to your tears—  
You, you know who taught me disdain.

But deem you I would deal you pain?  
I joy to know your heart is light,  
I journey glad to know it thus,  
And could I dare to make it less?  
Yours—you are day, but I am night.

“God knows I would descend to-day  
Devoutly on my knees, and pray  
Your way might be one path of peace  
Through bending boughs and blossom’d trees,  
And perfect bliss through roses fair;  
But know you, back—one long decade—  
How fervently, how fond I pray’d?—  
What was the answer to that prayer?

“The tale is old, and often told  
And lived by more than you suppose—  
The fragrance of a summer rose  
Press’d down beneath the stubborn lid,  
When sun and song are hush’d and hid,  
And summer days are gray and old.

“We parted so. Amid the bays  
And peaceful palms and song and shade  
Your cheerful feet in pleasure stray’d  
Through all the swift and shining days.

“You made my way another way,  
You bade it should not be with thine—  
A fierce and cheerless route was mine:  
But we have met, tonight—today.

“You talk of tears—of bitter tears—  
And tell of tyranny and wrong,  
And I re-live some stinging jeers,

Back, far back, in the leaden years.  
A lane without a turn is long,  
I muse, and whistle a reply—  
Then bite my lips and crush a sigh.

“You sympathize that I am sad,  
I sigh for you that you complain,  
I shake my yellow hair in vain,  
I laugh with lips, but am not glad.

\* \* \* \*

. . . . “His was a hot love of the hours,  
And love and lover both are flown;  
Now you walk, like a ghost, alone.  
He sipp'd your sunny lips, and he  
Took all their honey; now the bee  
Bends down the heads of other flowers  
And other lips lift up to kiss. . . .

. . . . I am not cruel, yet I find  
A savage solace for the mind  
And sweet delight in saying this. . . .  
Now you are silent, white, and you  
Lift up your hands as making sign,  
And your rich lips lie thin and blue  
And ashen . . . and you writhe, and you  
Breathe quick and tremble . . . is it true  
The soul takes wounds, sheds blood like wine?

\* \* \* \*

. . . . “You seem so most uncommon tall  
Against the lonely ghostly moon,  
That hurries homeward oversoon,  
And hides behind you and the pines;  
And your two hands hang cold and small,  
And your two thin arms lie like vines,

Or winter moonbeams on a wall.

What if you be a weary ghost,  
And I but dream, and dream I wake?  
Then wake me not, and my mistake  
Is not so bad; let's make the most  
Of all we get, asleep, awake—  
And waste not one sweet thing at all.

God knows that, at the best, life brings  
The soul's share so exceeding small  
We weary for some better things,  
And hunger even unto death.

Laugh loud, be glad with ready breath,  
For after all are joy and grief  
Not merely matters of belief?  
And what is certain after all,  
But death, delightful, patient death?  
The cool and perfect, peaceful sleep,  
Without one tossing hand, or deep  
Sad sigh and catching in of breath!

“Be satisfied. The price of breath  
Is paid in toll. But knowledge is  
Bought only with a weary care,  
And wisdom means a world of pain. . . .  
Well, we have suffered, will again,  
And we can work and wait and bear,  
Strong in the certainty of bliss.  
Death is delightful: after death  
Breaks in the dawn of perfect day.  
Let question he who will: the May  
Throws fragrance far beyond the wall.

“Death is delightful. Death is dawn.  
Fame is not much, love is not much,  
Yet what else is there worth the touch  
Of lifted hand with dagger drawn?  
So surely life is little worth:  
Therefore I say, Look up; therefore  
I say, One little star has more  
Bright gold than all the earth of earth.

“Yea, we must labor, plant to reap—  
Life knows no folding up of hands—  
Must plow the soul, as plowing lands;  
In furrows fashion'd strong and deep.  
Life has its lesson. Let us learn  
The hard, long lesson from the birth,  
And be content; stand breast to breast,  
And bear and battle till the rest.  
Yet I look to yon stars, and say:  
Thank Christ, ye are so far away  
That when I win you I can turn  
And look, and see no sign of earth.

\*       \*       \*       \*



## MYRRH

*Life knows no dead so beautiful  
As is the white cold coffin'd past;  
This I may love nor be betray'd:  
The dead are faithful to the last.  
I am not spouseless—I have wed  
A memory—a life that's dead.*

Farewell! for here the ways at last  
Divide—diverge, like delta'd Nile,  
Which after desert dangers pass'd  
Of many and many a thousand mile,  
As constant as a column stone,  
Seeks out the sea, divorced—alone.

And you and I have buried Love,  
A red seal on the coffin's lid;  
The clerk below, the court above,  
Pronounce it dead: the corpse is hid  
And I who never cross'd your will  
Consent . . . that you may have it still.

Farewell! a sad word easy said  
And easy sung, I think, by some. . . .  
. . . I clutch'd my hands, I turn'd my head  
In my endeavor and was dumb;  
And when I should have said, Farewell,  
I only murmur'd, "This is hell."

What recks it now, whose was the blame?  
But call it mine; for better used  
Am I to wrong and cold disdain,  
Can better bear to be accused

Of all that wears the shape of shame,  
Than have you bear one touch of blame.

I set my face for power and place,  
My soul is toned to sullenness,  
My heart holds not one sign nor trace  
Of love, or trust, or tenderness.  
But you—your years of happiness  
God knows I would not make them less.

And you will come some summer eve,  
When wheels the white moon on her track,  
And hear the plaintive night-bird grieve,  
And heed the crickets clad in black;  
Alone—not far—a little spell,  
And say, “Well, yes, he loved me well”;

And sigh, “Well, yes, I mind me now,  
None were so bravely true as he;  
And yet his love was tame somehow,  
It was so truly true to me;  
I wish’d his patient love had less  
Of worship and of tenderness:

“I wish it still, for thus alone  
There comes a keen reproach or pain,  
A feeling I dislike to own;  
Half yearnings for his voice again,  
Half longings for his earnest gaze,  
To know him mine always—always.”

\*      \*      \*      \*

I make no murmur; steady, calm,  
Sphinxlike I gaze on days ahead.  
No wooing word, no pressing palm,

No sealing love with lips seal-red,  
No waiting for some dusk or dawn,  
No sacred hour . . . all are gone.

I go alone; no little hands  
To lead me from forbidden ways,  
No little voice in other lands  
To cheer through all the weary days,  
Yet these are yours, and that to me  
Is much indeed. . . . So let it be. . . .

. . . A last look from my mountain  
wall. . . .  
I watch the red sun wed the sea  
Beside your home . . . the tides will fall  
And rise, but nevermore shall we  
Stand hand in hand and watch them flow,  
As we once stood. . . . Christ! this is so!

But, when the stately sea comes in  
With measured tread and mouth afoam,  
My darling cries above the din,  
And asks, "Has father yet come home?"  
Then look into the peaceful sky,  
And answers, gently, "By and by."  
\* \* \* \* \*

One deep spring in a desert sand,  
One moss'd and mystic pyramid,  
A lonely palm on either hand,  
A fountain in a forest hid,  
Are all my life has realized  
Of all I cherish'd, all I prized:

Of all I dream'd in early youth  
Of love by streams and love-lit ways,  
While my heart held its type of truth  
Through all the tropic golden days,  
And I the oak, and you the vine,  
Clung palm in palm through cloud or shine.

Some time when clouds hang overhead,  
(What weary skies without one cloud!)  
You may muse on this love that's dead,  
Muse calm when not so cold or proud,  
And say, "At last it comes to me,  
That none was ever true as he."

My sin was that I loved too much—  
But I enlisted for the war,  
Till we the deep-sea shore should touch,  
Beyond Atlanta—near or far—  
And truer soldier never yet  
Bore shining sword or bayonet.

I did not blame you—do not blame.  
The stormy elements of soul  
That I did scorn to tone or tame,  
Or bind down unto dull control  
In full fierce youth, they are all yours,  
With all their folly and their force.

God keep you pure, oh, very pure,  
God give you grace to dare and do;  
God give you courage to endure  
The all He may demand of you,—  
Keep time frosts from your raven hair,  
And your young heart without a care.

I make no murmur nor complain;  
Above me are the stars and blue  
Alluring far to grand refrain;  
Before, the beautiful and true,  
To love or hate, to win or lose;  
Lo! I will now arise, and choose.

But should you sometime read a sign,  
In isles of song beyond the brine,  
Then you will think a time, and you  
Will turn and say, "He once was mine,  
Was all my own; his smiles, his tears  
Were mine—were mine for years and years."



## BURNS

*Eld Druid oaks of Ayr,  
Precepts! Poems! Pages!  
Lessons! Leaves, and Volumes!  
Arches! Pillars! Columns  
In corridors of ages!  
Grand patriarchal sages  
Lifting palms in prayer!*

*The Druid beards are drifting  
And shifting to and fro,  
In gentle breezes lifting,  
That bat-like come and go.  
The while the moon is sifting  
A sheen of shining snow  
On all these blossoms lifting  
Their blue eyes from below.*

*No, 'tis not phantoms walking  
That you hear rustling there,  
But bearded Druids talking,  
And turning leaves in prayer.  
No, not a night-bird singing  
Nor breeze the broad bough swinging,  
But that bough holds a censer,  
And swings it to and fro.  
'Tis Sunday eve, remember,  
That's why they chant so low.*

*I linger in the autumn noon,  
I listen to the partridge call,  
I watch the yellow leaflets fall  
And drift adown the dimpled Doon.  
I lean me o'er the ivy-grown*

Auld brig, where Vandal tourists' tools  
Have ribb'd out names that would be known,  
Are known—known as a herd of fools.

Down Ailsa Craig the sun declines,  
With lances level'd here and there—  
The tinted thorns! the trailing vines!  
O braes of Doon! so fond, so fair!  
So passing fair, so more than fond!  
The Poet's place of birth beyond,  
Beyond the mellow bells of Ayr!

I hear the milk-maid's twilight song  
Come bravely through the storm-bent oaks;  
Beyond, the white surf's sullen strokes  
Beat in a chorus deep and strong;  
I hear the sounding forge afar,  
And rush and rumble of the car,  
The steady tinkle of the bell  
Of lazy, laden, home-bound cows  
That stop to bellow and to browse;  
I breathe the soft sea-wind as well.

O Burns! where bid? where bide ye now?  
Where rest you in this night's full noon,  
Great master of the pen and plow?  
Might you not on yon slanting beam  
Of moonlight kneeling to the Doon,  
Descend once to this hallow'd stream?  
Sure yon stars yield enough of light  
For heaven to spare your face one night.

O Burns! another name for song,  
Another name for passion—pride;

For love and poesy allied;  
For strangely blended right and wrong.

I picture you as one who kneel'd  
A stranger at his own hearthstone;  
One knowing all, yet all unknown,  
One seeing all, yet all conceal'd;  
The fitful years you linger'd here  
A lease of peril and of pain;  
And I am thankful yet again  
The gods did love you, plowman! peer!

In all your own and other lands,  
I hear your touching songs of cheer;  
The lowly peasant, lordly peer,  
Above your honor'd dust strike hands.

A touch of tenderness is shown  
In this unselfish love of Ayr,  
And it is well, you earn'd it fair;  
For all unhelmeted, alone,  
You proved a plowman's honest claim  
To battle in the lists of fame;  
You earn'd it as a warrior earns  
His laurels fighting for his land,  
And died—it was your right to go.  
O eloquence of silent woe!  
The Master leaning, reach'd a hand,  
And whisper'd, "It is finish'd, Burns!"

O sad, sweet singer of a Spring!  
Yours was a chill, uncheerful May,  
And you knew no full days of June;  
You ran too swiftly up the way,  
And wearied soon, so over-soon!

You sang in weariness and woe;  
You falter'd, and God heard you sing,  
Then touch'd your hand and led you so,  
You found life's hill-top low, so low,  
You cross'd its summit long ere noon.  
Thus sooner than one would suppose  
Some weary feet will find repose.



## BYRON \*

*In men whom men condemn as ill  
I find so much of goodness still,  
In men whom men pronounce divine  
I find so much of sin and blot,  
I do not dare to draw a line  
Between the two, where God has not*

O cold and cruel Nottingham!  
In disappointment and in tears,  
Sad, lost, and lonely, here I am  
To question, "Is this Nottingham  
Of which I dream'd for years and years?"  
I seek in vain for name or sign  
Of him who made this mold a shrine,  
A Mecca to the fair and fond  
Beyond the seas, and still beyond.

Where white clouds crush their  
drooping wings  
Against my snow-crown'd battlements,  
And peaks that flash like silver tents;  
Where Sacramento's fountain springs,  
And proud Columbia frets his shore  
Of somber, boundless wood and wold,  
And lifts his yellow sands of gold  
In plaintive murmurs evermore;

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\* The little old church where Byron, with all his kindred, are buried, at Hucknall Tokard, Nottes, has been twice torn down and rebuilt since the above was written, although it had stood for centuries little better than a ruin. A wreath of bay was laid above his dust, from Ina D. Coolbrith. The vicar there protested. The matter was appealed to the Bishop. The Bishop answered by sending another wreath. Then the King of Greece sent a wreath. Then the rebuilding began.

Where snowy dimpled Tahoe smiles,  
And where white breakers from the sea,  
In solid phalanx knee to knee,  
Surround the calm Pacific Isles,  
Then run and reach unto the land  
And spread their thin palms on the sand,—  
Is he supreme—there understood:  
The free can understand the free;  
The brave and good the brave and good.

Yea, he did sin; who hath reveal'd  
That he was more than man, or less?  
Yet sinn'd no more; but less conceal'd  
Than they who cloak'd their follies o'er,  
And then cast stones in his distress.  
He scorn'd to make the good seem more,  
Or make the bitter sin seem less.  
And so his very manliness  
The seeds of persecution bore.

When all his songs and fervid love  
Brought back no olive branch or dove,  
Or love or trust from any one,  
Proud, all unpitied and alone  
He lived to make himself unknown,  
Disdaining love and yielding none.  
Like some high-lifted sea-girt stone  
That could not stoop, but all the days,  
With proud brow fronted to the breeze,  
Felt seas blown from the south, and seas  
Blown from the north, and many ways,  
He stood—a solitary light  
In stormy seas and settled night—  
Then fell, but stirr'd the seas as far  
As winds and waves and waters are.

The meek-eyed stars are cold and white  
 And steady, fix'd for all the years ;  
 The comet burns the wings of night,  
 And dazzles elements and spheres,  
 Then dies in beauty and a blaze  
 Of light, blown far through other days.

The poet's passion, sense of pride,  
 His boundless love, the wooing throng  
 Of sweet temptations that betide  
 The warm and wayward child of song,  
 The world knows not : I lift a hand  
 To ye who know, who understand.

\* \* \* \* \*

The ancient Abbey's breast is broad,  
 And stout her massive walls of stone ;  
 But let him lie, repose alone  
 Ungather'd with the great of God,  
 In dust, by his fierce fellow man.  
 Some one, some day, loud voiced will speak  
 And say the broad breast was not broad,  
 The walls of stone were all too weak  
 To hold his proud dust, in their plan ;  
 The hollow of God's great right hand  
 Receives it ; let it rest with God.

In sad but beautiful decay  
 Gray Hucknall kneels into the dust,  
 And, cherishing her sacred trust,  
 Does blend her clay with lordly clay.

No sign or cryptic stone or cross  
 Unto the passing world has said,  
 "He died, and we deplore his loss."

No sound of sandall'd pilgrims' tread  
Disturbs the pilgrim's peaceful rest,  
Or frets the proud, impatient breast.  
The bat flits through the broken pane,  
The black swift swallow gathers moss,  
And builds in peace above his head,  
Then goes, then comes, and builds again.

And it is well; not otherwise  
Would he, the grand sad singer, will.  
The serene peace of paradise  
He sought—'tis his—the storm is still.  
Secure in his eternal fame,  
And blended pity and respect,  
He does not feel the cold neglect,—  
And England does not fear the shame.



## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

*Room! room to turn round in, to breathe and be  
free,  
To grow to be giant, to sail as at sea  
With the speed of the wind on a steed with his  
mane  
To the wind, without pathway or route or a rein.  
Room! room to be free where the white border'd  
sea  
Blows a kiss to a brother as boundless as he;  
Where the buffalo come like a cloud on the plain,  
Pouring on like the tide of a storm-driven main,  
And the lodge of the hunter to friend or to foe  
Offers rest; and unquestion'd you come or you  
go.  
My plains of America! Seas of wild lands!  
From a land in the seas in a raiment of foam,  
That has reached to a stranger the welcome of  
home,  
I turn to you, lean to you, lift you my hands.*

Run? Run? See this flank, sir, and I do love  
him so!  
But he's blind, badger blind. Whoa, Pache, boy,  
whoa.  
No, you wouldn't believe it to look at his eyes,  
But he's blind, badger blind, and it happen'd this  
wise:

"We lay in the grass and the sunburnt clover  
That spread on the ground like a great brown  
cover  
Northward and southward, and west and away  
To the Brazos, where our lodges lay,

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

---

One broad and unbroken level of brown.  
We were waiting the curtains of night to come  
down  
To cover us trio and conceal our flight  
With my brown bride, won from an Indian town  
That lay in the rear the full ride of a night.

“We lounged in the grass—her eyes were in  
mine,  
And her hands on my knee, and her hair was as  
wine  
In its wealth and its flood, pouring on and all  
over  
Her bosom wine red, and press'd never by one.  
Her touch was as warm as the tinge of the clover  
Burnt brown as it reach'd to the kiss of the sun.  
Her words they were low as the lute-throated  
dove,  
And as laden with love as the heart when it  
beats  
In its hot, eager answer to earliest love,  
Or the bee hurried home by its burthen of sweets.

“We lay low in the grass on the broad plain  
levels,  
Old Revels and I, and my stolen brown bride;  
“Forty full miles if a foot to ride!  
Forty full miles if a foot, and the devils  
Of red Comanches are hot on the track  
When once they strike it. Let the sun go down  
Soon, very soon,” muttered bearded old Revels  
As he peer'd at the sun, lying low on his back,  
Holding fast to his lasso. Then he jerk'd at his  
steed

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

---

And he sprang to his feet, and glanced swiftly around,  
And then dropp'd, as if shot, with an ear to the ground;  
Then again to his feet, and to me, to my bride,  
While his eyes were like flame, his face like a shroud,  
His form like a king, and his beard like a cloud,  
And his voice loud and shrill, as both trumpet and reed,—  
“Pull, pull in your lassoes, and bridle to steed,  
And speed you if ever for life you would speed.  
Aye, ride for your lives, for your lives you must ride!

For the plain is aflame, the prairie on fire,  
And the feet of wild horses hard flying before  
I heard like a sea breaking high on the shore,  
While the buffalo come like a surge of the sea,  
Driven far by the flame, driving fast on us three  
As a hurricane comes, crushing palms in his ire.”

“We drew in the lassoes, seized saddle and rein,  
Threw them on, cinched them on, cinched them over again,  
And again drew the girth; and spring we to horse,  
With head to the Brazos, with a sound in the air  
Like the surge of a sea, with a flash in the eye,  
From that red wall of flame reaching up to the sky;  
A red wall of flame and a black rolling sea  
Rushing fast upon us, as the wind sweeping free

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

And afar from the desert blown hollow and hoarse.

“Not a word, not a wail from a lip was left fall,  
We broke not a whisper, we breathed not a prayer,  
There was work to be done, there was death in the air,  
And the chance was as one to a thousand for all.

Twenty miles! . . . thirty miles! . . . a dim distant speck . . .  
Then a long reaching line, and the Brazos in sight!

And I rose in my seat with a shout of delight.  
I stood in my stirrup, and look'd to my right—  
But Revels was gone; I glanced by my shoulder  
And saw his horse stagger; I saw his head drooping

Hard down on his breast, and his naked breast stooping

Low down to the mane, as so swifter and bolder  
Ran reaching out for us the red-footed fire.

He rode neck to neck with a buffalo bull,  
That made the earth shake where he came in his course,

The monarch of millions, with shaggy mane full  
Of smoke and of dust, and it shook with desire  
Of battle, with rage and with bellowings hoarse.  
His keen, crooked horns, through the storm of his mane,

Like black lances lifted and lifted again;  
And I looked but this once, for the fire licked through,

And Revels was gone, as we rode two and two.

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

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"I look'd to my left then—and nose, neck, and shoulder

Sank slowly, sank surely, till back to my thighs,  
And up through the black blowing veil of her hair

Did beam full in mine her two marvelous eyes,  
With a longing and love yet a look of despair  
And of pity for me, as she felt the smoke fold her,

And flames leaping far for her glorious hair.

Her sinking horse falter'd, plunged, fell and was gone

As I reach'd through the flame and I bore her still on.

On! into the Brazos, she, Pache and I—

Poor, burnt, blinded Pache. I love him . . .  
That's why."

And here a few confidential lines for close friends: With better fortunes when my first London book was out, I had taken rooms at Museum Street, a few doors from the greatest storehouse of art and history on the globe, and I literally lived in the British Museum every day. But I had already overtaxed my strength, and my eyes were paining terribly. Never robust, I had always abhorred meat; and milk, from a child, had been my strongest drink. In the chill damp of London you must eat and drink. I was, without knowing it, starving and working myself to death. Always and wherever you are, when a hard bit of work is done, rest and refresh. Go to the fields, woods, to God and get strong. This is your duty as well as your right.

Letters—sweet, brave, good letters from the learned and great—were so many I could not read them with my poor eyes and had to leave them to friends. They found two from the Archhishop of Dublin. I was to breakfast with him to meet Browning, Dean Stanley, Houghton, and so on. I went to an old Jew close by to hire a dress suit, as Franklin had done for the Court of St. James. While fitting on the clothes I told him I was in haste to go to a great breakfast. He stopped, looked at me, looked me all over, and then told me I must not wear that,

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

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but he would hire me a suit of velvet. By degrees, as he fixed me up, he got at, or guessed at some facts, and when I asked to pay him he shook his head. I put some money down and he pushed it back. He said he had a son, his only family now, at Oxford, and he kept on fixing me up; cane, great, tall silk hat, gloves and all. Who would have guessed the heart to be found there?

Browning was just back from Italy, sunburnt and ruddy. "Robert, you are browning," smiled Lady Augusta. "And you are Angust—a," bowed the great poet grandly; and, by what coincidence—he, too, was in brown velvet, and so like my own that I was a bit uneasy.

Two of the Archbishop's beautiful daughters had been riding in the park with the Earl of Aberdeen. "And did you gallop?" asked Browning of the younger beauty. "I galloped, Joyce galloped, we galloped all three." Then we all laughed at the happy and hearty retort, and Browning, beating the time and clang of galloping horses' feet on the table with his fingers, repeated the exact measure in Latin from Virgil; and the Archbishop laughingly took it up, in Latin, where he left off. I then told Browning I had an order—it was my first—for a poem from the *Oxford Magazine*, and would like to borrow the measure and spirit of his "Good News" for a prairie fire on the plains, driving buffalo and all other life before it into a river. "Why not borrow from Virgil, as I did? He is as rich as one of your gold mines, while I am but a poor scribe." And this was my first of inner London.

Fast on top of this came breakfasts with Lord Houghton, lunch with Browning, a dinner with Rossetti to meet the great painters; the good old Jew garmenting me always, and always pushing back the pay.

Let me here note some things my new poets that you should not do; then some that you must. The random notes of this book will serve you better than all the letters I could ever write you. Spend no time or strength finding fault with a fellow scribe. I know but little of prize fighters or pirates of the high seas, but from what I am told they are far more courteous to one another than are American authors, except in sets and little circles.

If you feel a bitterness my young poet toward some one more favored at this time than yourself, pray God to send some good angel to lay you on your back, as is told in the story of Islam's prophet, and take the black drop from your heart, for it will make you not only weak and worthless if it remain, but it will

## KIT CARSON'S RIDE

make you certainly miserable. If you cannot learn to see beauty and love beauty in the life and work of Nature, then, believe me, you were not born to the sweetness of song. If you must find faults find them in your own work. I have done this, and it has kept me busy. Nor shall you to the extent of its newness, scorn a new character, mistake character for eccentricity. Our work, the calling of the poet, is the highest under the stars, so are his triumphs the rarest; and he who would despoil him would despoil the dead.

Nor shall you bewail the afflictions of your flesh. That is old, old; and has been done perfectly. The man who intrudes the weakness of his body is a bore. Let him, if he must, sing the weakness of his mind. But when "he putteth off his armor," then, and not till then, may he tell the pain and peril of his fight.

This poem, "Kit Carson," was not in any of my four first books, and so has not been rightly revised till now. It was too long for the tumultuous and swift action; and then the end was coarse and unworthy the brave spirit of Kit Carson. I have here cut and changed it much; as I cut and changed all the matter of my three preceding books in London when I cut and compressed all I had done worth preserving into the Songs of the Sierras.



## OYE-AGUA: OREGON

*My brave world-builders of the West!  
Why, who doth know ye? Who shall know  
But I, that on thy peaks of snow  
Brake bread the first? Who loves ye best?  
Who holds ye still, of more stern worth  
Than all proud peoples of the earth?*

*Yea, I, the rhymer of wild rhymes,  
Indifferent of blame or praise,  
Still sing of ye, as one who plays  
The same sweet air in all strange climes—  
The same wild, piercing highland air,  
Because—because, his heart is there.*

"Here are the continuous woods; here rolls the Oregon and  
hears no sound save its own dashing."

If there is a statelier name in all our constellation of stars, I have not heard it. *Alabama*—Here we rest—is sweet, attractive, restful, but the name has not the rush of waters, the misty tang of mold and sombre wood, of cloud-tossing trees, the strength, the stir, the color of Oregon: *Oye-agua*.

It is high time that some one should make clear the root of this great name; the written story of its origin. For it appealed to the poet Bryant most effectively, as well as many others, John Hay especially.

For more than thirty years I have made eager inquiry for evidence as to when and by whom in the earliest expeditions the stately names *Sierra Grande del Nord* and *Oye-agua* were bequeathed us on the North Pacific sea bank, but I am today empty handed. The letters I had received from the poet Bryant and John Hay and others were destroyed in the San Francisco fire. I had placed them for greater safety in the library of the Bohemian Club, along with autograph copies of books from eminent authors all over the world. I have not had heart to seriously take up the subject since. But I think the noble name speaks very plainly for itself and needs no written evidence of its etymology.

## OYE-AGUA: OREGON

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*Oye-el-agua: Hear the Water!* *Oye-agua: OREGON: Or-e-gon!*

In 1858, while teaching a sort of primer school, below Fort Vancouver, during vacation at Columbia College, the forerunner of the Oregon University, I met Father Broulette, the head of the Catholic School at Vancouver. This learned and kindly priest helped me in my Latin, when I went to him on Saturdays, and twice took me rowing in an Indian's canoe far up the great Oregon River to hear the waters; to hear the waters dashing down out of the clouds from the melting snows of Mount Hood. And he quoted Bryant's poem and laid great stress on the words: "Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound save its own dashing."

We could hear—you can today—hear something more than the dashing waters of the Oregon, that forget the precipitous steeps and sweep away out like a younger Yosemite, a broad, blowing Bridal Veil, till it trails in a lustrous white mist over the mighty river's tranquil hreast! You hear something more than the dashing waters. You hear an aeolian harp in the heavens. Now low, now high, as the winds sweep the snow-white bridal veil of broken mist to and fro, till you are ready to say, with the good old priest, "You hear away up youder in the clouds, an orchestra of angels. *Oye-agua, Or-e-gon!*" And when called to address the students of the State University about Oregon, a land I have known and loved longer than most of you have lived, gave the root and definition of this beautiful word, for so many foolish and unfair things have been said about its etymology.

But, alas! What evidence have I now at hand, further than that written on the face of the waters and heard in the clouds from the stupendous steeps? I appealed to Lummis, Librarian at Los Angeles, Editor of "Out West" and our most learned man in Spanish here, but he has given me no light, save to deride the accepted idea that the name came from the Spanish word "Orejones," big ears, and to prefer the name "Oregon," or sage; artemesia. But these early Spanish explorers knew nothing at all of our sage, or artemesia, beyond the mountains, and these great navigators who discovered us gave their beautiful names only from what they saw and heard. Here is what the learned Mr. Lummis says:

Los Angeles, Cal., May 6, 1907.

Dear Old Joaquin:—\* \* \* The Spanish derivation won't work for a minute on "aure el agua." It is not *aure*, but *oye*; Gannett's definition for Oregones is also fly-blown, since that is

## OYE-AGUA: OREGON

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not the Spanish word for big ears, which is Orejones (sounded h). There is a possibility, of course, that the region may have been named for the Oregon tribe. \* \* \* So far as I know, its etymology has never been satisfactorily settled; but I am making inquiries at once to see if there is any more recent knowledge, and, if so, will let you know at the first possible date. The general conception is that the name comes from the Oregon, or sage; but that is also doubtful.

With all good wishes,

Always,

Your friend,

CHAS. F. LUMMIS.

As for the offensive name, "Big Ears," that is simply out of nature and therefore impossible. We have the Nez Perce: Pierce nose, the Pend d'aureille, ears with pendants, or ear rings, but all our Indians have ever had notably small ears, small hands, small feet.

The learned Spanish professor at the University of California is also in doubt as to the definition of our name, but will not dispute Oye-agua: hear the waters.

When John Hay was Secretary of our Spanish Legation at Madrid, and writing his "Castilian Days," I laid the case before him once, when on a friendly visit, and proposed that we reach some result, but he protested that it would be wasted time to glean where Washington Irving had harvested, and at once quoted Bryant when I spoke of the waters dashing down out of the clouds. And John Hay, the great poet by nature, but the enforced great diplomat, said: "Let the waters dashing down out of heaven speak for themselves. I think it no stretch of imagination to submit that they are forever crying out to the clouds, like prophets in the wilderness, 'Oye-agua, Oye-agua! Oregon!'"

To understand the importance of Mr. Hay's words, we must know that he not only knew Spanish, but the Spanish Christian in these explorations of conquest. These men were mightily in earnest, and when they could not follow their calendar of saints, which they did as a rule, they named things from sound or color, or conspicuous features, as they found them. They rarely named anything after their revered men and women, as did the French and notably the English; they never jested with the names of places and things. They gave thousands and thousands of names, from the Straits of Magellan to the Straits of Vitus Behring, but you search in vain for one single such name as California's "Calamity Jane," "Yuha Dam River" or "Give a Damn Gulch."

## OYE-AGUA: OREGON

---

As Bryant, the poet, wrote; as Hay, the poet, said: "They heard, they saw the dashing of the waters down out of heaven, and they said, 'Hear the waters! Oye-agua! Oregon.' And Oregon it is, and Oregon it must and will remain!"

It would seem that Washington Irving, so long our minister at Madrid, should have found some record there, while mousing among the archives for material, but you search in vain for light in all his happy pages. But where did the boy poet, Bryant, come upon the pretty, poetic word, "Oregon"? And where did he find warrant to say, nearly a century ago, "Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound save its own dashing"? The poetry here is so perfect, the description, both sound and sense, so exact—and true poetry is the purest form of truth—that I know Oye-agua means Oregon, as I know Cape Blanco is Cape Blanco, because it looks it, lives it.



## SIERRA GRANDE DEL NORTE

Like fragments of an uncompleted world,  
From bleak Alaska, bound in ice and spray,  
To where the peaks of Darien lie curl'd  
In clouds, the broken lands loom bold and gray.  
The seamen nearing San Francisco Bay  
Forget the compass here; with sturdy hand  
They seize the wheel, look up, then bravely lay  
The ship to shore by rugged peaks that stand  
The stern and proud patrician fathers of the  
land.

They stand white stairs of heaven,—stand a  
line  
Of lifting, endless, and eternal white.  
They look upon the far and flashing brine,  
Upon the boundless plains, the broken height  
Of Kamiakin's battlements. The flight  
Of time is underneath their untopp'd towers.  
They seem to push aside the moon at night,  
To jostle and to loose the stars. The flowers  
Of heaven fall about their brows in shining  
showers.

They stand in line of lifted snowy isles  
High held above the toss'd and tumbled sea,—  
A sea of wood in wild unmeasured miles:  
White pyramids of Faith where man is free;  
White monuments of Hope that yet shall be  
The mounts of matchless and immortal song . . .  
I look far down the hollow days; I see  
The bearded prophets, simple-soul'd and strong,  
That strike the sounding harp and thrill the  
heeding throng.

## SIERRA GRANDE DEL NORTE

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Serene and satisfied! supreme! as lone  
As God, they loom like God's archangels churl'd;  
They look as cold as kings upon a throne;  
The mantling wings of night are crush'd and  
curl'd

As feathers curl. The elements are hurl'd  
From off their bosoms, and are bidden go,  
Like evil spirits, to an under-world.  
They stretch from Cariboo to Mexico,  
A line of battle-tents in everlasting snow.



## EXODUS FOR OREGON

A tale half told and hardly understood ;  
The talk of bearded men that chanced to meet,  
That lean'd on long quaint rifles in the wood,  
That look'd in fellow faces, spoke discreet  
And low, as half in doubt and in defeat  
Of hope ; a tale it was of lands of gold  
That lay below the sun. Wild-wing'd and fleet  
It spread among the swift Missouri's bold  
Unbridled men, and reach'd to where Ohio  
roll'd.

Then long chain'd lines of yoked and patient  
steers ;  
Then long white trains that pointed to the west,  
Beyond the savage west ; the hopes and fears  
Of blunt, untutor'd men, who hardly guess'd  
Their course ; the brave and silent women, dress'd  
In homely spun attire, the boys in bands,  
The cheery babes that laugh'd at all, and bless'd  
The doubting hearts, with laughing lifted  
hands ! . . .  
What exodus for far untraversed lands !

The Plains ! The shouting drivers at the  
wheel ;  
The crash of leather whips ; the crush and roll  
Of wheels ; the groan of yokes and grinding steel  
And iron chain, and lo ! at last the whole  
Vast line, that reach'd as if to touch the goal,  
Began to stretch and stream away and wind  
Toward the west, as if with one control ;  
Then hope loom'd fair, and home lay far behind ;  
Before, the boundless plain, and fiercest of their  
kind.

## EXODUS FOR OREGON

At first the way lay green and fresh as seas,  
And far away as any reach of wave;  
The sunny streams went by in belt of trees;  
And here and there the tassell'd tawny brave  
Swept by on horse, look'd back, stretch'd forth  
and gave

A yell of warn, and then did wheel and rein  
Awhile, and point away, dark-brow'd and grave,  
Into the far and dim and distant plain  
With signs and prophecies, and then plunged on  
again.

Some hills at last began to lift and break;  
Some streams began to fail of wood and tide,  
The somber plain began betime to take  
A hue of weary brown, and wild and wide  
It stretch'd its naked breast on every side.  
A babe was heard at last to cry for bread  
Amid the deserts; cattle low'd and died,  
And dying men went by with broken tread,  
And left a long black serpent line of wreck and  
dead.

Strange hunger'd birds, black-wing'd and still  
as death,  
And crown'd of red with hooked beaks, blew  
low  
And close about, till we could touch their  
breath—  
Strange unnamed birds, that seem'd to come  
and go  
In circles now, and now direct and slow,  
Continual, yet never touch the earth;  
Slim foxes slid and shuttled to and fro

At times across the dusty weary dearth  
Of life, look'd back, then sank like crickets in a  
hearth.

Then dust arose, a long dim line like smoke  
From out of riven earth. The wheels went  
groaning by,  
Ten thousand feet in harness and in yoke,  
They tore the ways of ashen alkali,  
And desert winds blew sudden, swift and dry.  
The dust! it sat upon and fill'd the train!  
It seem'd to fret and fill the very sky.  
Lo! dust upon the beasts, the tent, the plain,  
And dust, alas! on breasts that rose not up again.

They sat in desolation and in dust  
By dried-up desert streams; the mother's hands  
Hid all her bended face; the cattle thrust  
Their tongues and faintly call'd across the lands.  
The babes, that knew not what this way through  
sands  
Could mean, did ask if it would end today . . .  
The panting wolves slid by, red-eyed, in bands  
To pools beyond. The men look'd far away,  
And, silent, saw that all a boundless desert lay.

They rose by night; they struggled on and on  
As thin and still as ghosts; then here and there  
Beside the dusty way before the dawn,  
Men silent laid them down in their despair,  
And died. But woman! Woman, frail as fair!  
May man have strength to give to you your due;  
You falter'd not, nor murmur'd anywhere,  
You held your babes, held to your course, and  
you

Bore on through burning hell your double burdens through.

Men stood at last, the decimated few,  
Above a land of running streams, and they?  
They push'd aside the boughs, and peering  
through  
Beheld afar the cool, refreshing bay;  
Then some did curse, and some bend hands to  
pray;  
But some look'd back upon the desert, wide  
And desolate with death, then all the day  
They mourned. But one, with nothing left be-  
side  
His dog to love, crept down among the ferns and  
died.



## THE HEROES OF OREGON

I stand upon the green Sierra's wall;  
Against the east, beyond the yellow grass,  
I see the broken hill-tops lift and fall,  
Then sands that shimmer like a sea of glass . . .  
There lies the nation's great high road of dead.  
Forgotten aye, unnumbered, and, alas!  
Unchronicled in deed or death; instead,  
The new aristocrat lifts high a lordly head.

My brave and unremember'd heroes, rest;  
You fell in silence, silent lie and sleep.  
Sleep on unsung, for this, I say, were best:  
The world today has hardly time to weep;  
The world today will hardly care to keep  
In heart her plain and unpretending brave.  
The desert winds, they whistle by and sweep  
About you; brown'd and russet grasses wave  
Along a thousand leagues that lie one common  
grave.

The proud and careless pass in palace car  
Along the line you blazon'd white with bones;  
Pass swift to people, and possess and mar  
Your lands with monuments and letter'd stones  
Unto themselves. Thank God! this waste dis-  
owns  
Their touch. His everlasting hand has drawn  
A shining line around you. Wealth bemoans  
The waste your splendid grave employs.  
Sleep on,  
No hand shall touch your dust this side of God  
and dawn.

I let them stride across with grasping hands  
And strive for brief possession; mark and line  
With lifted walls the new divided lands,  
And gather growing herds of lowing kine.  
I could not covet these, could not confine  
My heart to one; all seem'd to me the same,  
And all below my mountain home, divine  
And beautiful, held in another's name,  
As if the herds and lands were mine,  
All mine, or his, all beautiful the same.

I have not been, shall not be, understood;  
I have not wit, nor will, to well explain,  
But that which men call good I find not good.  
The lands the savage held, shall hold again,  
The gold the savage spurn'd in proud disdain  
For centuries; go, take them all; build high  
Your gilded temples; strive and strike and strain  
And crowd and controvert and curse and lie  
In church and State, in town and citadel, and  
        . . . die.

And who shall grow the nobler from it all?  
The mute and unsung savage loved as true,—  
He felt, as grateful felt, God's blessings fall  
About his lodge and tawny babes as you  
In temples,—Moslem, Christian, infidel, or Jew.  
        . . . The sea, the great white, braided, bound-  
            ing sea,  
Is laughing in your face; the arching blue  
Remains to God; the mountains still are free,  
A refuge for the few remaining tribes and me.

Your cities! from the first the hand of God  
Has been against them; sword and flood and  
flame,

THE HEROES OF OREGON

The earthquake's march, and pestilence, have  
trod  
To undiscerning dust the very name  
Of antique capitals; and still the same  
Sad destiny besets the battle-fields  
Of Mammon and the harlot's house of shame.  
Lo! man with monuments and lifted shields  
Against his city's fate. A flame! his city yields.



## WHERE ROLLS THE OREGON

\* \* \* \* \*

See once these stately scenes, then roam no more;

No more remains on earth to eager eyes ;  
The cataract comes down, a broken roar,  
The palisades defy approach, and rise  
Green moss'd and dripping to the clouded skies.  
The cañon thunders with its full of foam,  
And calls loud-mouth'd, and all the land defies ;  
The mounts make fellowship and dwell at home  
In snowy brotherhood beneath their purpled dome.

The rainbows swim in circles round, and rise  
Against the hanging granite walls till lost  
In drifting dreamy clouds and dappled skies,  
A grand mosaic intertwined and toss'd  
Along the mighty cañon, bound and cross'd  
By storms of screaming birds of sea and land ;  
The salmon rush below, bright red and boss'd  
In silver. Tawny, tall, on either hand  
You see the savage spearman nude and silent stand.

Here sweep the wide wild waters cold and white  
And blue in their far depths ; divided now  
By sudden swift canoe as still and light  
As feathers nodding from the painted brow  
That lifts and looks from out the imaged prow.  
Ashore you hear the papoose shout at play ;  
The curl'd smoke comes from underneath the bough  
Of leaning fir : the wife looks far away  
And sees a swift slim bark divide the dashing spray.

WHERE ROLLS THE OREGON

Slow drift adown the river's level'd deep,  
And look above; lo, columns! woods! the snow!  
The rivers rush upon the brink and leap  
From out the clouds three thousand feet below,  
And land afoam in tops of firs that grow  
Against your river's rim: they splash, they play  
In clouds, now loud and now subdued and slow,  
A thousand thunder tones; they swing and  
sway  
In idle winds, long leaning shafts of shining  
spray.

An Indian summer-time it was, long past,  
We lay on this Columbia, far below  
The stormy water falls, and God had cast  
Us heaven's stillness. Dreamily and slow  
We drifted as the light bark chose to go.  
An Indian girl with ornaments of shell  
Began to sing. . . . The stars may hold  
such flow  
Of hair, such eyes, but rarely earth. There fell  
A sweet enchantment that possess'd me as a spell.

We saw an elk forsake the sable wood,  
Step quick across the rim of shining sand,  
Breast out unscared against the flashing flood,  
Then brisket deep with lifted antlers stand,  
And ears alert, look sharp on either hand,  
Then whistle shrill to dam and doubting fawn  
To cross, then lead with black nose from the land.  
They cross'd, they climb'd the heaving hills, were  
gone,  
A sturdy charging line with crooked sabers  
drawn.

## WHERE ROLLS THE OREGON

Then black swans cross'd us slowly low and  
still;  
Then other swans, wide-wing'd and white as  
snow,  
Flew overhead and topp'd the timber'd hill,  
And call'd and sang afar, coarse-voiced and  
slow,  
Till sounds roam'd lost in somber firs be-  
low . . .  
Then clouds blew in, and all the sky was cast  
With tumbled and tumultuous clouds that grow  
Red thunderbolts. . . . A flash! A thunder-  
blast!  
The clouds were rent, and lo! Mount Hood  
hung white and vast.

\* \* \* \* \*



## PICTURE OF A BULL

Once, morn by morn, when snowy mountains  
flamed  
With sudden shafts of light that shot a flood  
Into the vale like fiery arrows aim'd  
At night from mighty battlements, there stood  
Upon a cliff high-limn'd against Mount Hood,  
A matchless bull, fresh forth from sable wold,  
And standing so seem'd grander 'gainst the wood  
Than winged bull that stood with tips of gold  
Beside the brazen gates of Nineveh of old.

A time he toss'd the dewy turf, and then  
Stretch'd forth his wrinkled neck, and loud  
He call'd above the far abodes of men  
Until his breath became a curling cloud  
And wreathed about his neck a misty shroud.  
He then as sudden as he came pass'd on  
With lifted head, majestic and most proud,  
And lone as night in deepest wood withdrawn  
He roamed in silent rage until another dawn.

What drove the hermit from the valley herd,  
What cross of love, what cold neglect of kind,  
Or scorn of unpretending worth had stirr'd  
The stubborn blood and drove him forth to find  
A fellowship in mountain cloud and wind,  
I ofttyme wonder'd much; and ofttyme thought  
The beast betray'd a royal monarch's mind,  
To lift above the low herd's common lot,  
And make them hear him still when they had  
fain forgot.

\* \* \* \* \*

## VAQUERO

His broad-brimm'd hat push'd back with careless air,  
The proud vaquero sits his steed as free  
As winds that toss his black abundant hair.  
No rover ever swept a lawless sea  
With such a haught and heedless air as he  
Who scorns the path, and bounds with swift disdain  
Away, a peon born, yet born to be  
A splendid king; behold him ride, and reign.

How brave he takes his herds in branding days,  
On timber'd hills that belt about the plain;  
He climbs, he wheels, he shouts through winding ways  
Of hiding ferns and hanging fir; the rein  
Is loose, the rattling spur drives swift; the mane  
Blows free; the bullocks rush in storms before;  
They turn with lifted heads, they rush again,  
Then sudden plunge from out the wood, and pour  
A cloud upon the plain with one terrific roar.

Now sweeps the tawny man on stormy steed,  
His gaudy trappings toss'd about and blown  
About the limbs as lithe as any reed;  
The swift long lasso twirl'd above is thrown  
From flying hand; the fall, the fearful groan  
Of bullock toil'd and tumbled in the dust—  
The black herds onward sweep, and all disown  
The fallen, struggling monarch that has thrust  
His tongue in rage and roll'd his red eyes in disgust.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE GREAT EMERALD LAND

A morn in Oregon! The kindled camp  
Upon the mountain brow that broke below  
In steep and grassy stairway to the damp  
And dewy valley, snapp'd and flamed aglow  
With knots of pine. Above, the peaks of snow,  
With under-belts of sable forests, rose  
And flash'd in sudden sunlight. To and fro  
And far below, in lines and winding rows,  
The herders drove their bands, and broke the  
deep repose.

I heard their shouts like sounding hunter's  
horn,  
The lowing herds made echoes far away;  
When lo! the clouds came driving in with morn  
And broke like breakers of a stormy bay  
Against the grassy shingle fold on fold,  
So like some splendid ocean, snowy white and  
Toward the sea, as fleeing from the day.  
The valleys fill'd with curly clouds. They lay  
Below, a levell'd sea that reach'd and roll'd  
cold.

The peopled valley lay a hidden world,  
The shouts were shouts of drowning men that  
died,  
The broken clouds along the border curl'd,  
And bent the grass with weighty freight of tide.  
A savage stood in silence at my side,  
Then sudden threw aback his beaded strouds  
And stretch'd his hand above the scene, and cried,  
As all the land lay dead in snowy shrouds:

## THE GREAT EMERALD LAND

"Behold! the sun bathes in a silver sea of clouds."

Here lifts the land of clouds! Fierce mountain forms,

Made white with everlasting snows, look down  
Through mists of many cañons, mighty storms  
That stretch from Autumn's purple, drench and drown

The yellow hem of Spring. Tall cedars frown  
Dark-brow'd, through banner'd clouds that stretch and stream

Above the sea from snowy mountain crown.  
The heavens roll, and all things drift or seem  
To drift about and drive like some majestic dream.

In waning Autumn time, when purpled skies  
Begin to haze in indolence below

The snowy peaks, you see black forms arise,  
In rolling thunder banks above, and throw  
Quick barricades about the gleaming snow.

The strife begins! The battling seasons stand  
Broad breast to breast. A flash! Contentions grow

Terrific. Thunders crash, and lightnings brand  
The battlements. The clouds possess the conquered land.

Then clouds blow by, the swans take loftier flight,

The yellow blooms burst out upon the hill,  
The purple camas comes as in a night,  
Tall spiked and dripping of the dews that fill

## THE GREAT EMERALD LAND

The misty valley. Sunbeams break and spill  
Their glory till the vale is full of noon.  
Then roses belt the streams, no bird is still.  
The stars, as large as lilies, meet the moon  
And sing of summer, born thus sudden full and  
soon.

\* \* \* \* \*



## TO REST AT LAST\*

What wonder that I swore a prophet's oath  
Of after days. . . . I push'd the boughs  
apart,  
I stood, look'd forth, and then look'd back, all  
loath  
To leave my shadow'd wood. I gather'd heart  
From very fearfulness; with sudden start  
I plunged in the arena; stood a wild  
Uncertain thing, all artless, in all art. . . .  
The brave approved, the fair lean'd fair and  
smiled,—  
True lions touch with velvet-touch a timid child.

But now enough of men. Enough, brief day  
Of tinsel'd life. The court, the castle gate  
That open'd wide along the pleasant way,  
The gracious converse of the kingly great  
Had made another glad and well elate  
With all. A world of thanks; but I am grown  
Aweary. . . . I am not of this estate;  
The poor, the plain brave border-men alone  
Were my first love, and these I will not now  
disown.

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\* These final verses are peculiarly descriptive of the home I have built here on the Hights for my declining years; although written and published in London—*Songs of the Sunlands*—in 1873. True, my strong love of a home of my own, woods, and “a careless ordered garden” led me to settle down in other lands more than once and in places widely different from this which I had fancied and pictured long, long ago, but I was never well or at all content in any place till now. Even the people about me, unworldly, dreamful, silent and of other lands and tongues are, like my home, the same I had pictured more than a quarter of a century ago, and I joy in this, that I have been thus true to myself. The only departure from my dear first plan is in finding my ideal home by the glorious gate of San Francisco instead of the somber fir-set sea bank far to the north, “Where Rolls the Oregon.”

I know a grassy slope above the sea,  
The utmost limit of the westmost land.  
In savage, gnarl'd, and antique majesty  
The great trees belt about the place, and stand  
In guard, with mailed limb and lifted hand,  
Against the cold approaching civic pride.  
The foamy brooklets seaward leap; the bland  
Still air is fresh with touch of wood and tide,  
And peace, eternal peace, possesses, wild and  
wide.

Here I return, here I abide and rest;  
Some flocks and herds shall feed along the  
stream;  
Some corn and climbing vines shall make us  
blest  
With bread and luscious fruit. . . . The sunny  
dream  
Of wampum men in moccasins that seem  
To come and go in silence, girt in shell,  
Before a sun-clad cabin-door, I deem  
The harbinger of peace. Hope weaves her spell  
Again about the wearied heart, and all is well.

Here I shall sit in sunlit life's decline  
Beneath my vine and somber verdant tree.  
Some tawny maids in other tongues than mine  
Shall minister. Some memories shall be  
Before me. I shall sit and I shall see,  
That last vast day that dawn shall reinspire,  
The sun fall down upon the farther sea,  
Fall wearied down to rest, and so retire,  
A splendid sinking isle of far-off fading fire.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*

## OUR UNDISCOVERED OREGON

California, with her bold and brilliant pens, her shiploads of gold ever at hand, her commerce with the Atlantic and the Orient, long overshadowed Oregon; Oregon was only her unexplored northern county.

The bill of indictment against our once stronger neighbor is an old and true bill, born mainly of ignorance and a bit of bitter irony. This Oregon was the land of everlasting rains, "continuous woods," of preachers, missionaries. But Oregon appealed to Time, to God's first-born, and answered not at all. Time has testified, however, that we had not one stick of stately forest too many; that we had not one drop of rain too much; that our serene content was the content of strength and prosperity; that our flocks and herds are the fattest and finest in the world, and that our preachers and teachers have ever kept us above the tumult and terrors of strikes, vigilante hangings, race riots and stuffed ballot-boxes. So that today the population on our side of the line is greater than that of the other side;\* the wealth, *per capita*, greater; the commerce by land greater; the commerce by sea far greater. We need not point to our exhaustless mineral resources; they speak for themselves. But the soil, the superior soil, the one and only solid and enduring foundation, is only today beginning to find appreciation. Our apples are the first in demand and the very highest in value in the

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\* Washington (long a part of Oregon) and Oregon have a combined population considerably greater than California's.

great cities of all the world. Let this one particular speak for a dozen others: a little time ago, two Japanese gardeners leased ten acres of ground, an old beaver dam. At the end of the season they sold their ten-acre crop, as it stood in the field, for ten thousand dollars, cash.

It is now being discovered that the great Klamath Lake country, over against California, is one vast, old beaver dam, and it is filling—is filled—with Californians.

But I desire not to speak of our undiscovered Oregon so far as sister states are concerned, but as concerns ourselves. "Know thyself," insisted Socrates. Does Oregon know herself? Oregon knows her books. Oregon is the best educated land under the sun, so far as books are concerned. We began building schoolhouses, colleges and universities away back in the morning of our history. There is not a native son of Oregon, white, black, brown or red, without an education. Many, too many, are educated at Eastern and neighboring universities. For still the old tribal tradition of primitive man is with us and "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth."

Yet, with all our knowledge of books, do we know Oregon? Have we discovered our Oregon?

Starting in from the California side, fifty miles or more from the line, we come to the deepest body of fresh water in the world. What do we know about it? We do not even know how deep it is. Recent Federal surveys give it a depth, so far as explored, of two thousand eight hundred feet, an altitude of about nine thousand feet

above the sea, a diameter of twenty-five miles, a circle of almost vertical walls of two thousand feet, transparent but stormy and perilous waters, alive with fowl and enormous fishes.

As you climb to this new wonder of the world you see a level natural bridge of lava one hundred yards wide, under which a stormy river rushes and sobs and sighs and cries like a god in pain, and then thunders down in a cataract that calls out through the somber wilderness a defiant challenge to Yosemite. Yet what knows or cares imperious California for or about Crater Lake, our natural bridge or this new and most impressive Yosemite?

The President recently declared this sea the heart of a National park. A party of us went with the soldiers, year before last, hoisted the Stars and Stripes, marched and made speeches all around the fearful mountain that had knocked its forehead against the stars and then burst into flame, like Pelé, and was not. And we know little or nothing more about it, and the learnéd of other lands smiled at our claim of the deepest body of fresh water in the world. For we had, outside of the Federal survey, no evidence to offer in the world's court of learning. Snow peaks here and snow peaks there, mighty mountains of lava looking down, dark-browed and sullen, into this sea of silence, into the tomb of their departed emperor; but we have no evidence, as yet, of this awful presence, or even of its existence, save some deep and glass-like grooves in the solid granite of a little spur that literally overhangs the lake, thousands of feet below. This one single witness stands to its waist in

eternal snow far around to the west, the highest point. Oh for a Cuvier to take this one bone and give us the story of this once stately mastodon!

The waters flowing away from the torn and tattered walls that hang above this wondrous scene seek the Klamath River to the south, the Umpqua to the west and the Columbia to the north. So that we know Crater Lake is on the summit of the mountain range known in early times, and as named by the Spanish explorers, Sierra Grande del Norte. Yonder to the south, in all his glory of eternal whiteness, looms Mount Shasta, monarch of the Sierra de Nevadas. But California has insisted that the Sierras end with Mount Shasta (named Chaste Butte by the French). The truth is, however, that the Spaniards named these divisions of the one continuous range of the Sierras—Sierra Madre, away down toward and in Mexico, the Sierra de Nevada in California, and this Oregon range, the Sierra Grande del Norte. Let us retain this name. There is strength, meaning and melody here. The cheap and childish local name, "Cascades," means nothing and is entirely misleading.

The next great wonder of our undiscovered Oregon is still less known to the world and almost entirely unknown to ourselves. This is the great Marble Halls of Oregon; a cavern, greater, so far as yet known, than the great Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. Its existence was first known only a few years back and, to this hour, has been explored for the depth of but a few miles.

But of all the undiscovered splendors of

Oregon, her prolific and sounding sea-bank is surely the most marvelous. And it, too, is almost entirely unknown. You may listen, as I have listened, for half a century, to hear one word from our great men in the halls of Congress about our share of the sea of seas. Our snow peaks pierce heaven and speak somewhat for themselves, but our sea-bank, being severed from our valleys by the glorious, but almost impassable Coast Range in a mantle of "continuous woods," remains forever as a book that is sealed. And yet the worth of these woods is simply beyond computation. In the first place, the sea coast of Oregon is entirely unique. The coast of Maine and Washington, alone, are in the least similar; and that similarity ends with the likeness of woods, fishes, and the fertility of soil. The mountains of gold, copper, silver, cinnabar, and the golden sands of the sea are Oregon's alone.

The entire seashore of what is miscalled the Pacific Ocean, from Cape Horn to Northern California, thousands on thousands of miles, is barren and bare as the palm of your hand. But there is not a bare or barren spot from the southern reach of our sea-bank of fragrant cedars till you touch the lands of everlasting ice. The trees hook their roots in the very rocks of the sea wall and cast their midnight shadows far out on the mighty ocean with the morning sun, so fertile is the soil, so refreshing is the sea mist here forever, night after night, year after year, century after century, as the ages surge by. There is a stateliness, a largeness, a something in this solemn midnight of black mountains, with their rim of unsunned snow half-hidden in the

## OUR UNDISCOVERED OREGON

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clouds, that must be seen from far at sea to be felt and even partly appreciated.

Let us pass swiftly up our sea line by land, noting briefly its story and glory as we go.

Please observe that I hesitate to use the misleading and perilous name, "Pacific Ocean." It is not pacific. A few years ago a tidal wave off Peru tossed a ship hundreds of feet up the shore, where it hangs to this day. This so-called Pacific is the stormiest and most troubled of seas. It is cruel, angry, aggressive, from Cape Horn to Cape Nome. Do not dare to make familiar with its waters, here or elsewhere this side of San Diego away down to Mexico. I should say that this so-called Pacific Ocean is the mighty "American Ocean," the American Ocean from the extreme of South American waters south to the limit of North America to the north. It is restless, aggressive, progressive. Plowed by American battleships, dotted with American islands, it is and will ever be the American Ocean, American in character, American in color, strength and action, let it remain American in name. Cortez cut off the head of Balboa for discovering and giving it this name, the "Pacific." That misleading name has wrecked thousands of ships, drowned thousands and thousands of men. Cortez should not only have cut off his head, but cut it off clean away down to his navel!

Woods, woods, woods, from the sea-bank and up and up, away back to the snow, from the flowers of spring up and up and up to the snows of winter. Woods and woods and woods, a wealth of woods that would pay the National debt, if cared for; with only here and there a

dimple of pasture, potatoes and corn at the debouchment of some little mountain stream into the ocean and literally alive with fishes.

All along here were once enterprising little sea ports. Then the railroads inland cut off their trade, and now the woods, the persistent and ever-present woods, populous with elk, deer and bear, vocal with grouse, Mongolian and American pheasants, are resuming their old places all along the gold-sown sea-bank. We ride on and on, under the overhanging woods and woods and woods, to the mouth of *Rouge* River. And let no true Oregonian ever let the insulting appellation "Rogue" pass his lips; for it is a noble river, rich in gold, rich in silver, rich in cinnabar, rich in woods, famous for its fishes, its honest, hospitable and home-loving farmer folk. Years and years ago the Legislature, impatient at wandering Californians, who lost no opportunity to put reproach upon this land and always insisted on refusing to pronounce the pretty name of the perfect river, *Rouge*, passed an act calling it Gold River, but there were too many gold rivers and the name never came into popular use.

A hard day's ride up from the county seat at the river's debouchment and Port Orford, a city that in the early fifties and sixties well-nigh built San Francisco and Los Angeles with its ship-loads and shiploads of stately cedars, as if Hiram of Tyre had ruled here. But forest fire after forest fire has left only here and there, far up the stony steeps, a solitary figure standing in solemn black, as if in perpetual mourning for burned and abandoned Port Orford.

Here, all along here, forty, fifty miles, was once the famous gold coast, as famous in its day of golden sands as was ever Klondike. And far up the mountain trail, a hard day's ride, are the once famous copper mountains, cinnabar and placer gold mines, all abandoned now, almost utterly forgotten now. Yet as you ride up the solid, sandy bank or under the eternal woods, you will find a few old seamen washing the sands of gold, who will tell you in perfect confidence that these almost inaccessible mountains on the headwaters of the Sixes and Coquille Rivers are the richest that the world ever saw.

Woods and woods and woods! Waters literally alive with fishes as you ford the sandy rivers, and far at sea you behold an island in the form of a triumphal arch through which fishermen paddle their boats, or in which they cast their lines for cod and rest at night.

When I first knew this vast region, in the early sixties, the settlers, combining fishing, mining and farming, in a small way, were compelled to build very strong and high fences to protect their fruit trees from the bands of horned elk. And the ships carrying cedar lumber to San Francisco loaded their upper decks with great antlers. These broad antlers, dropped each season, were so plentiful that it was dangerous to ride through an untraveled thicket of these dense woods, before forest fires prevailed.

I bought a bit of land at that time, on the border of a beautiful little inland lake, and last year, wanting to look it over, as there was talk of a railroad, I went out and away from our hunter's camp, one evening, in an opening grown

all over by sal-lal bushes, and seeing a black stump in the middle I thought I would go and climb up and stand there, so as to get a better view. As I got within about a dozen yards of my black stump it seemed to move; then I saw that my black stump had arms, long, black arms, two long, black arms that reached out and down and drew in the sal-lal berries into a big, red and very busy mouth. What big, long, black, hairy arms! And I was entirely without arms of that sort, or any sort, that would be of much account in an argument with a bear. I stopped, stopped still, perhaps not quite still, but I didn't run. I walked, walked backwards, but I didn't run. I do not like sal-lal berries. They are too sweet and too fattening. I owned the land, but I didn't like the berries, and I didn't want the bear. Besides, it was getting dark, and time to get back to camp. I went, but I didn't run.

This, fifty years ago, was the Indian's Eden. Fish, elk, deer, bear and sal-lal berries. It is the same Eden still. But the Indians? Here and there, on some sunny headland or by some sheltered river's mouth, a mound or a few little hollows where his squaw had dug a hole for his winter's "wickiup," and that is his only sign.

By rail, now, to Coos Bay, a city, a city too well known to talk about and too little known to be appreciated. For the wealth of its vast coal and forest fields make its value beyond the most fabulous figures.

Umpqua, once a populous seaport, was first settled by the British. Commodore Wilkes, in 1842, reported to the Naval Department that he found gold-bearing quartz in Umpqua, and

Fremont, reporting to Congress, after a battle with the Modocs, in which he lost one-third of his command, complains bitterly that the Indians used steel-pointed arrows procured from British traders at Umpqua, and adds: "Kit Carson pronounces them the most beautifully warlike arrows he ever saw."

A day's ride now, and Siuslaw; a stage line. Saw mills and sand and sand and saw mills, a land of sand and river and gold. Far up this richest of all rivers, rich in so many sorts of riches, is a water power that will some day furnish light for Willamette's glittering string of midland cities that lie almost within hail from the mighty mountain tops of continuous woods.

And here you find the first and only railroad, as yet, that ties midland Oregon to her unexplored ocean shores. But other roads are building, building fast and building far, and as this glorious coast, young and grand in stature, serene and sunlit in color, has been surveyed, explored, discovered, from Yaquina to the conflux of the ocean and the great Oregon River, we will leave our sea-bank to the busy builders. Only I invoke you, I conjure you, go and see this least-known, this undiscovered seashore of Oregon while still the healthful smell of balsam and fir and pine and cedar and hemlock is in the air. Go before the smoke of mills and cars and factories has made dim the scenic glories to the eyes of him who idolizes nature; go in berry time and go in bear time. But don't go alone; go in couples or quartets. And may you be "happy ever afterwards!"

## DAWN AT SAN DIEGO

*My city sits amid her palms;  
The perfume of her twilight breath  
Is something as the sacred balms  
That bound sweet Jesus after death,  
Such soft, warm twilight sense as lies  
Against the gates of Paradise.*

*Such prayerful palms, wide palms upreached!  
This sea mist is as incense smoke,  
Yon mission walls a sermon preached—  
White lily with a heart of oak.  
And O, this twilight! O the grace  
Of twilight on yon lifted face!*

*I love you, twilight,—love with love  
So loyal, loving, fond that I  
When folding these worn hands to die,  
Shall pray God lead me not above,  
But leave me, twilight, sad and true,  
To walk this lonesome world with you.*

*Yea, God knows I have walked with night;  
I have not seen, I have not known  
Such light as beats upon His throne.  
I know I could not bear such light;  
Therefore, I beg, sad sister true,  
To share your shadow-world with you.*

*I love you, love you, maid of night,  
Your perfumed breath, your dreamful eyes,  
Your holy silences, your sighs  
Of mateless longing; your delight*

## DAWN AT SAN DIEGO

*When night says, Hang on yon moon's horn  
Your russet gown, and rest till morn.*

The sun is dying; space and room,  
Serenity, vast sense of rest,  
Lie bosomed in the orange west  
Of orient waters. Hear the boom  
Of long, strong billows; wave on wave,  
Like funeral guns above a grave.

Now night folds all; no sign or word;  
But still that rocking of the deep—  
Sweet mother, rock the world to sleep:  
Still rock and rock; as I have heard  
Sweet mother gently rock and rock  
The while she folds the little frock.

\* \* \* \* \*

Broad mesa, brown, bare mountains, brown,  
Bowed sky of brown, that erst was blue;  
Dark, earth-brown curtains coming down—  
Earth-brown, that all hues melt into;  
Brown twilight, born of light and shade;  
Of night that came, of light that passed. . . .  
How like some lorn, majestic maid  
That wares not whither way at last!

Now perfumed Night, sad-faced and far,  
Walks up the world in somber brown.  
Now suddenly a loosened star  
Lets all her golden hair fall down—  
And Night is dead Day's coffin-lid,  
With stars of gold shot through his pall. . . .  
I hear the chorus, katydid;  
A katydid, and that is all.

Some star-tipt candles foot and head;  
Some perfumes of the perfumed sea;  
And now above the coffined dead  
Dusk draws great curtains lovingly;  
While far o'er all, so dreamful far,  
God's Southern Cross by faith is seen  
Tipt by one single blazing star,  
With spaces infinite between.

\* \* \* \* \*

Come, love His twilight, the perfume  
Of God's great trailing garment's hem;  
The sense of rest, the sense of room,  
The garnered goodness of the day,  
The twelve plucked hours of His tree,  
When all the world has gone its way  
And left perfection quite to me  
And Him who, loving, fashioned them.

I know not why that wealth and pride  
Win not my heart or woo my tale.  
I only know I know them not;  
I only know to cast my lot  
Where love walks noiselessly with night  
And patient nature; my delight  
The wild rose of the mountain side,  
The lowly lily of the vale;

To live not asking, just to live;  
To live not begging, just to be;  
To breathe God's presence in the dusk  
That drives out loud, assertive light —  
To never ask, but ever give;  
To love my noiseless mother, Night;

DAWN AT SAN DIEGO

Her vast hair moist with smell of musk,  
Her breath sweet with eternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

I

A hermit's path, a mountain's perch,  
A sandaled monk, a dying man—  
A far-off, low, adobe church,  
Below the hermit's orange-trees  
That cap the clouds above the seas,  
So far, its spire seems but a span.

\* \* \* \* \*

A low-voiced dove! The dying Don  
Put back the cross and sat dark-browed  
And sullen, as a dove flew out  
The bough, and circling round about,  
Was bathed and gathered in a cloud,  
That, like some ship, sailed on and on.

But let the gray monk tell the tale;  
And tell it just as told to me.  
This Don was chiefest of the vale  
That banks by San Diego's sea,  
And who so just, so generous,  
As he who now lay dying thus?

But wrong, such shameless Saxon wrong,  
Had crushed his heart, had made him hate  
The sight, the very sound of man.  
He loved the lonely wood-dove's song;  
He loved it as his living mate.  
And lo! the good monk laid a ban

And penance of continual prayer—  
But list, the living, dying there!

For now the end was, and he lay  
As day lies banked against the night—  
As lies some bark at close of day  
To wait the dew-born breath of night;  
To wait the ebb of tide, to wait  
The swift plunge through the Golden Gate:

The plunge from bay to boundless sea—  
From life through narrow straits of night,  
From time to bright eternity—  
To everlasting walks of light.  
Some like as when you sudden blow  
Your candle out and turn you so  
To sleep unto the open day:  
And thus the priest did pleading say:

“You fled my flock, and sought this steep  
And stony, star-lit, lonely height,  
Where weird and unnamed creatures keep  
To hold strange thought with things of night  
Long, long ago. But now at last  
Your life sinks surely to the past.  
Lay hold, lay hold, the cross I bring,  
Where all God’s goodly creatures cling.

“Yea! You are good. Dark-browed  
and low  
Beneath your shaggy brows you look  
On me, as you would read a book:  
And darker still your dark brows grow  
As I lift up the cross to pray,  
And plead with you to walk its way.

“Yea, you are good! There is not one,  
From Tia Juana to the reach  
And bound of gray Pacific Beach,  
From Coronado’s palm-set isle  
And palm-hung pathways, mile on mile,  
But speaks you, Señor, good and true.  
But oh, my silent, dying son!  
The cross alone can speak for you  
When all is said and all is done.

“Come! Turn your dim, dark eyes to me,  
Have faith and help me plant this cross  
Beyond where blackest billows toss,  
As you would plant some pleasant tree:  
Some fruitful orange-tree, and know  
That it shall surely grow and grow,  
As your own orange-trees have grown,  
And be, as they, your very own.

“You smile at last, and pleasantly:  
You love your laden orange-trees  
Set high above your silver seas  
With your own honest hand; each tree  
A date, a day, a part, indeed,  
Of your own life, and walk, and creed.

“You love your steeps, your star-set blue:  
You watch yon billows flash, and toss,  
And leap, and curve, in merry rout,  
You love to hear them laugh and shout—  
Men say you hear them talk to you;  
Men say you sit and look and look,  
As one who reads some holy book—  
My son, come, look upon the cross?

“Come, see me plant amid your trees  
My cross, that you may see and know  
’T will surely grow, and grow, and grow,  
As grows some trusted little seed;  
As grows some secret, small good deed;  
The while you gaze upon your seas. . . .  
Sweet Christ, now let it grow, and bear  
Fair fruit, as your own fruit is fair.

“Aye! ever from the first I knew,  
And marked its flavor, freshness, hue,  
The gold of sunset and the gold  
Of morn, in each rich orange rolled.

“I mind me now, ’t was long since, friend,  
When first I climbed your path alone,  
A savage path of brush and stone,  
And rattling serpents without end.

“Yea, years ago, when blood and life  
Ran swift, and your sweet, faithful wife—  
What! tears at last; hot, piteous tears  
That through your bony fingers creep  
The while you bend your face, and weep  
As if your heart of hearts would break—  
As if these tears were your heart’s blood,  
A pent-up, sudden, bursting flood—  
Look on the cross, for Jesus’ sake.”

II

’T was night, and still it seemed not night.  
Yet, far down in the cañon deep,  
Where night had housed all day, to keep

Companion with the wolf, you might  
Have hewn a statue out of night.

The shrill coyote loosed his tongue  
Deep in the dark arroyo's bed;  
And bat and owl above his head  
From out their gloomy caverns swung:  
A swoop of wings, a cat-like call,  
A crackle sharp of chaparral!

Then sudden, fitful winds sprang out,  
And swept the mesa like a broom;  
Wild, saucy winds, that sang of room!  
That leapt the cañon with a shout  
From dusty throats, audaciously  
And headlong tore into the sea,  
As tore the swine with lifted snout.

Some birds came, went, then came again  
From out the hermit's wood-hung hill;  
Came swift, and arrow-like, and still,  
As you have seen birds, when the rain—  
The great, big, high-born rain, leapt white  
And sudden from a cloud like night.

And then a dove, dear, nun-like dove,  
With eyes all tenderness, with eyes  
So loving, longing; full of love,  
That when she reached her slender throat  
And sang one low, soft, sweetest note,  
Just one, so faint, so far, so near,  
You could have wept with joy to hear.

The old man, as if he had slept,  
Raised quick his head, then bowed and wept

For joy, to hear once more her voice.  
With childish joy he did rejoice;  
As one will joy to surely learn  
His dear, dead love is living still;  
As one will joy to know, in turn,  
He, too, is loved with love to kill.

He put a hand forth, let it fall  
And feebly close; and that was all.  
And then he turned his tearful eyes  
To meet the priest's, and spake this wise:—

Now mind, I say, not one more word  
That livelong night of nights was heard  
By monk or man, from dusk till dawn;  
And yet that man spake on and on.

Why, know you not, soul speaks to soul?  
I say the use of words shall pass.  
Words are but fragments of the glass;  
But silence is the perfect whole.

And thus the old man, bowed and wan,  
And broken in his body, spake—  
Spake youthful, ardent, on and on,  
As dear love speaks for dear love's sake.

“You spake of her, my wife; behold!  
Behold my faithful, constant love!  
Nay, nay, you shall not doubt my dove,  
Perched there above your cross of gold!

“Yea, you have books, I know, to tell  
Of far, fair heaven; but no hell  
To her had been so terrible

As all sweet heaven, with its gold  
And jasper gates, and great white throne,  
Had she been banished hence alone.

“I say, not God himself could keep,  
Beyond the stars, beneath the deep,  
Or 'mid the stars, or 'mid the sea,  
Her soul from my soul one brief day,  
But she would find some pretty way  
To come and still companion me.

“And say, where bide your souls, good priest?  
Lies heaven west, lies heaven east?  
Let us be frank, let us be fair;  
Where is your heaven, good priest, where?

“Is there not room, is there not place  
In all those boundless realms of space?  
Is there not room in this sweet air,  
Room 'mid my trees, room anywhere,  
For souls that love us thus so well,  
And love so well this beauteous world,  
But that they must be headlong hurled  
Down, down, to undiscovered hell?

“Good priest, we questioned not one word  
Of all the holy things we heard  
Down in your pleasant town of palms  
Long, long ago—sweet chants, sweet psalms,  
Sweet incense, and the solemn rite  
Above the dear, believing dead.  
Nor do I question here tonight  
One gentle word you may have said.  
I would not doubt, for one brief hour,  
Your word, your creed, your priestly power,

Your purity, unselfish zeal,  
But there be fears I scorn to feel!

Let those who will, seek realms above,  
Remote from all that heart can love,  
In their ignoble dread of hell.  
Give all, good priest, in charity;  
Give heaven to all, if this may be,  
And count it well, and very well.

“But I—I could not leave this spot  
Where she is waiting by my side.  
Forgive me, priest; it is not pride;  
There is no God where she is not!

“You did not know her well. Her creed  
Was yours; my faith it was the same.  
My faith was fair, my lands were broad.  
Far down where yonder palm-trees rise  
We two together worshiped God  
From childhood. And we grew in deed,  
Devout in heart as well as name,  
And loved our palm-set paradise.

“We loved, we loved all things on earth,  
However mean or miserable.  
We knew no thing that had not worth,  
And learned to know no need of hell.

“Indeed, good priest, so much, indeed,  
We found to do, we saw to love,  
We did not always look above  
As is commanded in your creed,  
But kept in heart one chiefest care,  
To make this fair world still more fair.

“ ‘T was then that meek, pale Saxon came;  
 With soulless gray and greedy eyes,  
 A snake’s eyes, cunning, cold and wise,  
 And I—I could not fight, or fly  
 His crafty wiles at all; and I—  
 Enough, enough! I signed my name.

“It was not loss of pleasure, place,  
 Broad lands, or the serene delight  
 Of doing good, that made long night  
 O’er all the sunlight of her face.  
 But there be little things that feed  
 A woman’s sweetness, day by day,  
 That strong men miss not, do not need,  
 But, shorn of all can go their way  
 To battle, and but stronger grow,  
 As grow great waves that gather so.

“She missed the music, missed the song,  
 The pleasant speech of courteous men,  
 Who came and went, a comely throng,  
 Before her open window, when  
 The sea sang with us, and we two  
 Had heartfelt homage, warm and true.

“She missed the restfulness, the rest  
 Of dulcet silence, the delight  
 Of singing silence, when the town  
 Put on its twilight robes of brown;  
 When twilight wrapped herself in night  
 And couched against the curtained west.

“But not one murmur, not one word  
 From her sweet baby lips was heard.  
 She only knew I could not bear

To see sweet San Diego town,  
Her palm-set lanes, her pleasant square,  
Her people passing up and down,  
Without black hate, and deadly hate  
For him who housed within our gate,  
And so, she gently led my feet  
Aside to this high, wild retreat.

“How pale she grew, how piteous pale  
The while I wrought, and ceaseless wrought  
To keep my soul from bitter thought,  
And build me here above the vale.  
Ah me! my selfish, Spanish pride!  
Enough of pride, enough of hate,  
Enough of her sad, piteous fate:  
She died: right here she sank and died.

“She died, and with her latest breath  
Did promise to return to me,  
As turns a dove unto her tree  
To find her mate at night and rest;  
Died, clinging close against my breast;  
Died, saying she would surely rise  
So soon as God had loosed her eyes  
From the strange wonderment of death.

“How beautiful is death! and how  
Surpassing good, and true, and fair!  
How just is death, how gently just,  
To lay his sword against the thread  
Of life when life is surely dead  
And loose the sweet soul from the dust!  
I laid her in my lorn despair  
Beneath that dove, that orange-bough—  
How strange your cross should stand just there!

“And then I waited hours, days:  
Those bitter days, they were as years.  
My soul groped through the darkest ways;  
I scarce could see God’s face for tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I clutched my knife, and I crept down,  
A wolf, to San Diego town.  
On, on, amid my palms once more,  
Keen knife in hand, I crept that night.  
I passed the gate, then fled in fright;  
Black crape hung fluttered from the door!

“I climbed back here, with heart of stone:  
I heard next morn one sweetest tone;  
Looked up, and lo! there on that bough  
She perched, as she sits perching now.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I heard the bells peal from my height,  
Peal pompously, peal piously;  
Saw sable hearse, in plumes of night  
With not one thought of hate in me.

“I watched the long train winding by,  
A mournful, melancholy lie—  
A sable, solemn, mourning mile—  
And only pitied him the while.  
For she, she sang that whole day through:  
Sad-voiced, as if she pitied, too.

“They said, ‘His work is done, and well.’  
They laid his body in a tomb  
Of massive splendor. It lies there  
In all its stolen pomp and gloom—

But list! his soul—his soul is where?  
In hell! In hell! But where is hell?

“Hear me but this. Year after year  
She trained my eye, she trained my ear;  
No book to blind my eyes, or ought  
To prate of hell, when hell is not.  
I came to know at last, and well,  
Such things as never book can tell.

“And where was that poor, dismal soul  
Ye priests had sent to paradise?  
I heard the long years roll and roll,  
As rolls the sea. My once dimmed eyes  
Grew keen as long, sharp shafts of light.  
With eager eyes and reaching face  
I searched the stars night after night:  
That dismal soul was not in space!

“Meanwhile my green trees grew and grew;  
And sad or glad, this much I knew,  
It were no sin to make more fair  
One spot on earth, to toil and share  
With man, or beast, or bird; while she  
Still sang her soft, sweet melody.

“One day, a perfumed day in white—  
Such restful, fresh, and friendlike day,—  
Fair Mexico a mirage lay  
Far-lifted in a sea of light—  
Soft, purple light, so far away.  
I turned yon pleasant pathway down,  
And sauntered leisurely tow’rd town.

## DAWN AT SAN DIEGO

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“I heard my dear love call and coo,  
And knew that she was happy, too,  
In her sad, sweet, and patient pain  
Of waiting till I came again.

“Aye, I was glad, quite glad at last;  
Not glad as I had been when she  
Walked with me by yon palm-set sea,  
But sadly and serenely glad:  
As though 't were twilight like, as though  
You knew, and yet you did not know,  
That sadness, most supremely sad  
Should lay upon you like a pall,  
And would not, could not pass away  
Till you should pass; till perfect day  
Dawns sudden on you, and the call  
Of birds awakens you to morn—  
A babe new-born; a soul new-born.

“Good priest, what are the birds for? Priest,  
Build ye your heaven west or east?  
Above, below, or anywhere?  
I only ask, I only say  
She sits there, waiting for the day,  
The fair, full day to guide me there.

\* \* \* \* \*

“What, he? That creature? Ah, quite true!  
I wander much, I weary you:  
I beg your pardon, gentle priest.  
Returning up the stone-strewn steep,  
Down in yon jungle, dank and deep,  
Where toads and venomous reptiles creep,  
There, there, I saw that hideous beast!

"Aye, there ! coiled there beside my road,  
Close coiled behind a monstrous toad,  
A huge flat-bellied reptile hid !  
His tongue leapt red as flame ; his eyes,  
His eyes were burning hells of lies—  
His head was like a coffin's lid :

"Saint George ! Saint George ! I gasped for  
breath.  
The beast, tight coiled, swift, sudden sprang  
High in the air, and, rattling, sang  
His hateful, hissing song of death !

"My eyes met his. He shrank, he fell,  
Fell sullenly and slow. The swell  
Of braided, brassy neck forgot  
Its poise, and every venomed spot  
Lost luster, and the coffin head  
Cowed level with the toad, and lay  
Low, quivering with hate and dread :  
The while I kept my upward way.

"What ! Should have killed him ? Nay, good  
priest.  
I know not what or where 's your hell.  
But be it west or be it east,  
His hell is there ! and that is well !

"Nay, do not, do not question me ;  
I could not tell you why I know ;  
I only know that this is so,  
As sure as God is equity.

"Good priest, forgive me, and good-by,  
The stars slow gather to their fold ;

I see God's garment hem of gold  
Against the far, faint morning sky.

"Good, holy priest, your God is where?  
You come to me with book and creed;  
I cannot read your book; I read  
Yon boundless, open book of air.  
What time, or way, or place I look,  
I see God in His garden walk;  
I hear Him through the thunders talk,  
As once He talked, with burning tongue,  
To Moses, when the world was young;  
And, priest, what more is in your book?

"Behold! the Holy Grail is found,  
Found in each poppy's cup of gold;  
And God walks with us as of old.  
Behold! the burning bush still burns  
For man, whichever way he turns;  
And all God's earth is holy ground.

"And—and—good priest, bend low your head,  
The sands are crumbling where I tread,  
Beside the shoreless, soundless sea.  
Good priest, you came to pray, you said;  
And now, what would you have of me?"

The good priest gently raised his head,  
Then bowed it low and softly said:  
"Your blessing, son, despite the ban."  
He fell before the dying man;  
And when he raised his face from prayer,  
Sweet Dawn, and two sweet doves were there.















